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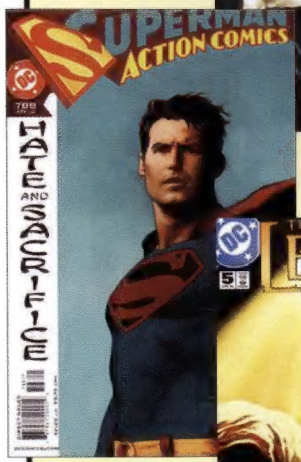

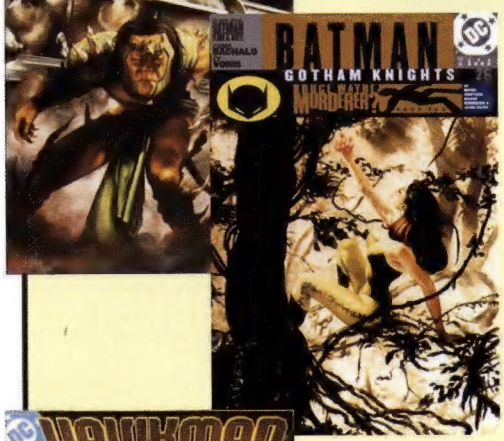

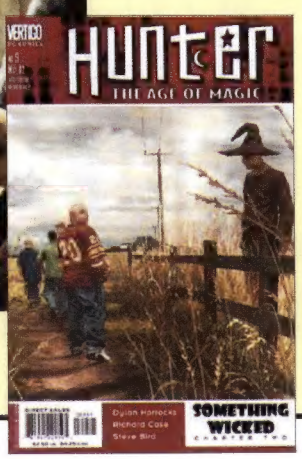

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www.comicsinternational.com

Editorial 01273 566 222
fax 01273 566 333
(from North America replace the 0 with: 011 44)
345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ

Comics International is published every four weeks by Quality Communications Limited and is printed by Scottish County Press (0131 663 2404)

Publisher/editor: Dez Skinn
Production: Loriann Luckings
News: Mike Conroy
Features: Steven Turner
Associate editor: Tim Pilcher
Listings: Jim Hannah
Assists: Carlie, Gary, Mark and Anton
Print Liaison: Jim MacDonald

Subscriptions 01621 877 231
8 Galliford Rd, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD
Subscriptions Manager: Joy Flood
UK .....£21.50 (1st class) £18 (2nd class)
USA/Canada ..... $60 US (air) $40 US (sea)
Mainland Europe/Eire ..... £25/• 50 (air only)
Australasia/Asia ..... £40 (air) £25 (sea)
All are 12-issue rates. Single or back issues at 1/12th of above

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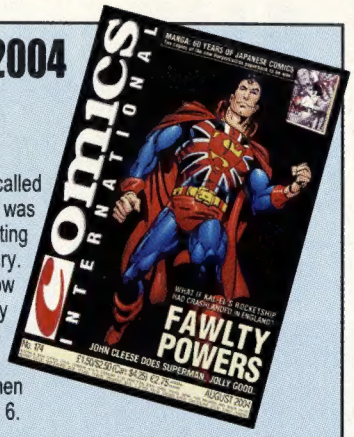

Inside this issue

COVER: OK, so the book's actually called **True Brit**, but we figured Fawlty Powers was a much better gag for a front cover celebrating John Cleese writing a Superman story. While it would have been nice to see fellow Brit Dave Gibbons on art, he's obviously tied up with his own project (see page 22) and John Byrne was at least born here. For more on the DC work of one of the men behind Bicycle Repair Man, see page 6.

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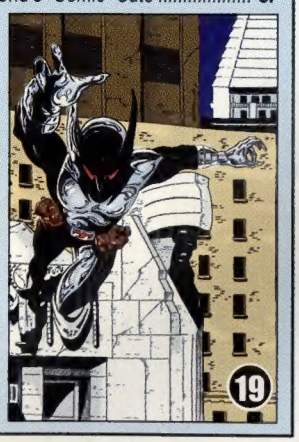

Sez Dez

Editorial
Dez Skinn

SO, WHAT have you been up to this last week? I had an email yesterday from an old pal in the States asking me that very question. OK, so he did open with "Hey, punk", but we'll forgive him that as he draws exceedingly good and astonishing X-Men. Having chastised him for his opener, I considered what I'd been up to and replied with the following:

The week kicked off with an end of year bash at Brighton City College, where I ended up dancing five times with the (female) principal. Next day, I apparently appeared on the top rating Today programme (BBC Radio 4). Missed it myself as it had been recorded weeks earlier, but my partner's step-mum phoned to say she'd heard me while she was having a shower and been instantly embarrassed at the idea of me being there in the shower with her!

The following day was booked for an interview (alongside Avi Arad, Stan Lee, et al!) for MTV worldwide by somebody who turned out to be a lifelong fan, regalling me with stories of **Warrior**, **House of Hammer** and **Doctor Who Weekly**. Then, at my foolhardy and drunken invitation from the college do, we hosted two Iraqi college principals and their boss at Chez Dez for dinner, and it turned out to be on the day of their jumped-forward independence.

Week culminated in the bosses of BIMM (our equivalent of the Fame Academy, Brighton Institute of Modern Music) inviting us to their own end of year bash. A beach barbecue followed by a club gig, with 20 student bands performing in three hours, all hosted by that geezer who starred in *Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels* (you *have* seen the movie?).

Ending with a "So, you done owt much, sunbeam?" coloquialism, I realised it had been one packed week. And how much actually related to comics, even the dinner party. Wanting to know how things were going in Baghdad, our guests were invited up to our third floor offices to avail themselves of the internet. The head man, Doctor Mohammed, who'd studied at university in California, appeared amazed. "This in wonderful," he remarked, looking around. "We were talking about such trivial things, why did you not tell us you did all this?" he remarked. "You didn't ask," I replied, somewhat glibly, but actually shocked he thought our politically-fuelled dinner talk had been less important.

Even the BIMMs gig set me thinking. The bands, rapidly rotating to squeeze in 20, were so bloody good. The enthusiasm was exilarating, and the difference between professional musicians and students was miniscule. Comparing it to our industry, from small press to the big two, I felt envy.

And I wondered, why is it the outside world seems to hold our industry in higher esteem than we do? Academics from a war-torn country cared about comics, the BIMMs bosses are dying to visit our offices, MTV and Radio 4 are fascinated.

So isn't it about time we stopped being so petty, bitchy and nit-picking and actually celebrated the creativity and freedom our fantastic industry actually has to offer?

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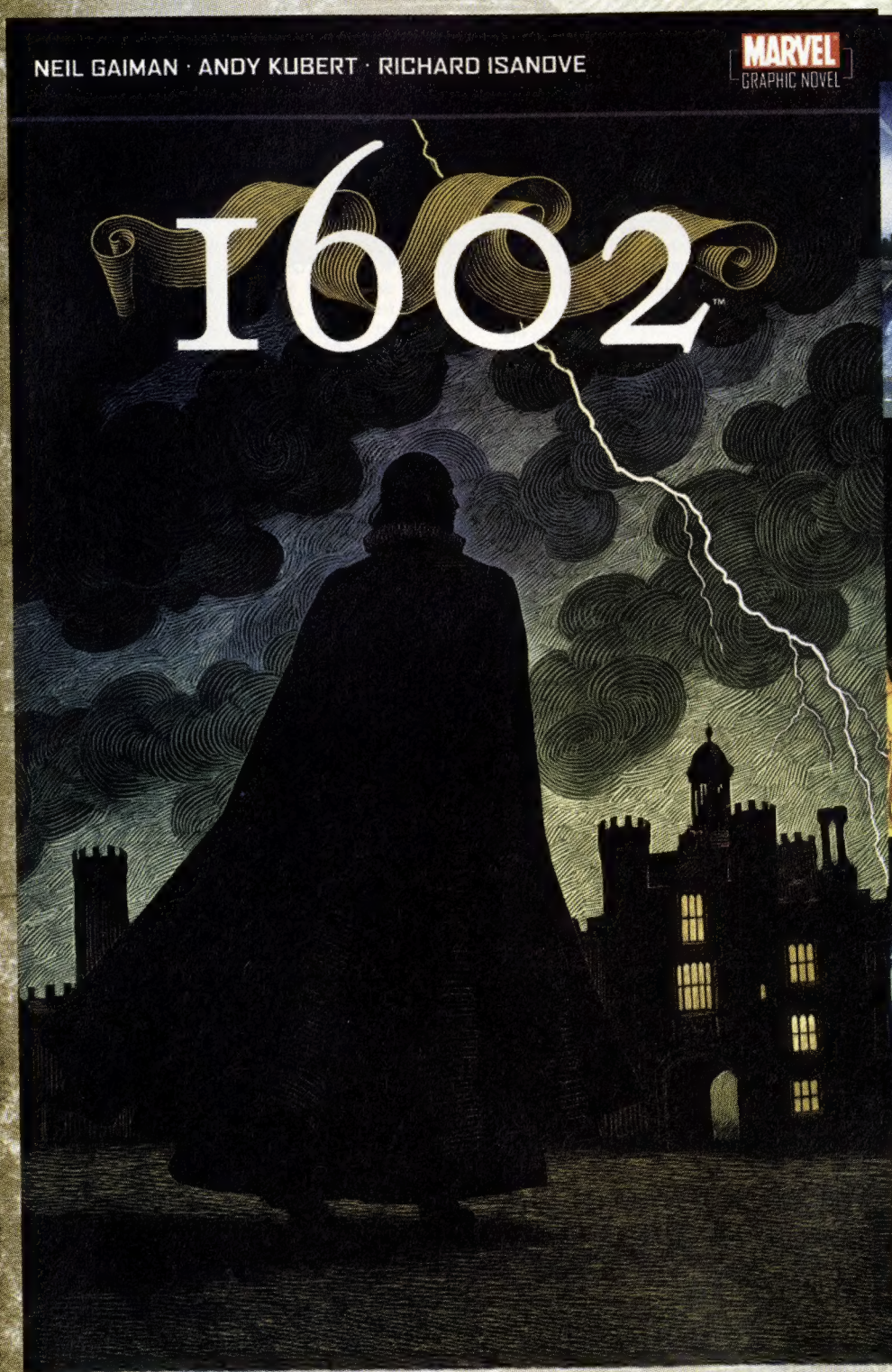

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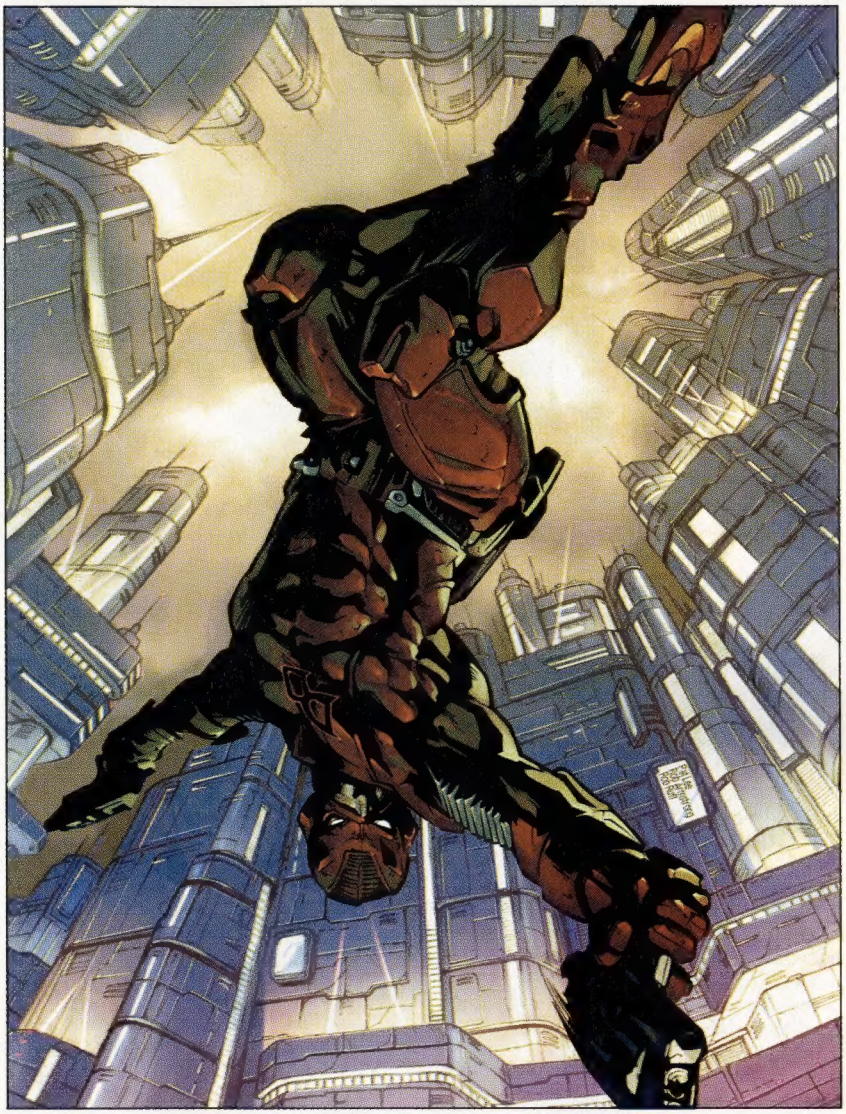
Marvel Knights celebrates its first five years in 2099



*Above: Pat Lee's art for the cover to the **Marvel Knights 2099: Daredevil** one-shot. Above right: A first look at Mutant as designed by Khary Randolph. Below: The cover to the first issue of the premiere title in Marvel's original 2099 line, 1992's **Spider-Man 2099**; art by Rick Leonardi and Al Williamson.*

Imprint established by Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti goes back to the future with five oneshots

DESPITE its first comic, the revamped **Daredevil** #1, actually shipping six years ago in September 1998, Marvel Knights is celebrating its fifth anniversary this September with a set of specials that take place in its spurious centennial year.

Marvel Knights 2099 – a fifth week event spearheaded by writer Robert Kirkman – is also a tip of the hat to the possible Marvel Universe future that was the setting for the line of titles launched in 1992 *[see below]*.

Set in an alternate 2099, it consists of five $2.99 one-shots, each by a different artist. The fifth week event occurs on September 29th and introduces a new hero, Mutant, as well as 2099 reworkings of Black Panther, Inhumans, the Punisher and Daredevil,

Mutant 2099

Kirkman told **CI** that the event has no connection beyond its title with Marvel's previous future line. However, when asked to take on the project, he had already pitched **Mutant 2099** as a way of reviving that earlier concept but instead this led to his creation becoming the cornerstone of the new 2099.

Adding that he was told to create 2099 incarnations of the initial four Marvel Knights properties, he said the **Marvel Knights 2099: Mutant** title is a prequel to the series he pitched. "If the five specials do well, they're going to spin-off into the **Mutant 2099** series."

Currently writing a four-issue **Captain America** arc, Kirkman said all five **2099** titles take place in the future that he outlined in his proposal: superheroes have been all-but eradicated but – with a Sentinel on every street corner – there is virtually no crime. "For the last 50 years, any mutant born has been registered with a serial number and given medication to suppress their powers. Tomorrow's Knights heroes are all underground."

Marvel abandons future after six years

THE BRAINCHILD of then-Marvel editor Joey Cavalieri, the 2099 line was a more focused attempt to expand the Marvel comic franchise in the wake of the abject failure of Jim Shooter's 1986 effort, the New Universe.

Set in a possible future, the comics were to feature reworkings of Marvel's most popular heroes. The line launched in 1992 with **Spider-Man 2099**, which also introduced the less-than altruistic megacorps. The concept that welded all the titles together, these were the world's corporations, which – in this dystopian future – own nearly everything, and everyone, in a new world order. Like Big Brother, they watch over and control the populace, giving them what they need and more to survive only by working for the megacorps in helping them make profits

Financial difficulties

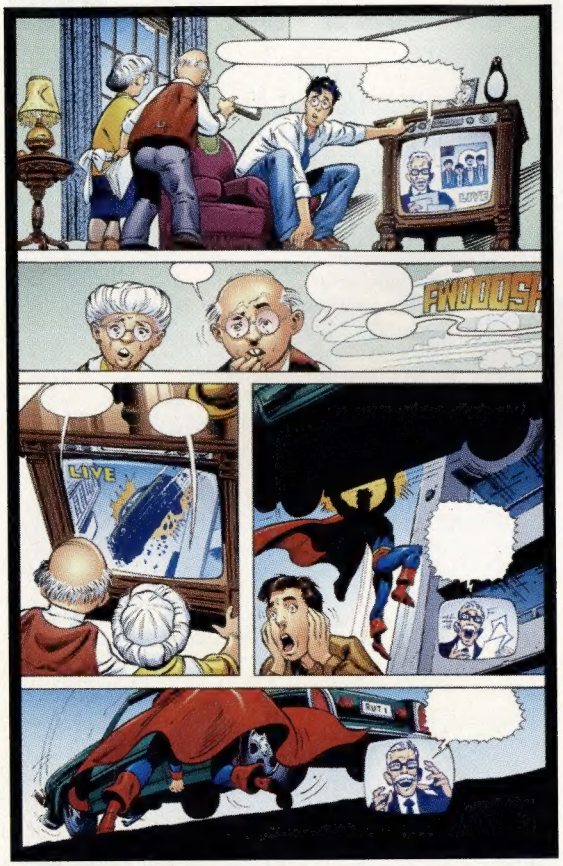
Ravage was the second 2099 title. Featuring a new hero as opposed to a reworked one, its star was created by Stan Lee. The Punisher and Doom – who may or may not have been the Fantastic Four's old foe – were the next to get their own titles. These were followed by the Hulk, Ghost Rider, X-Men, the FF and another new concept, X-Nation.

But, in 1996 as Marvel's financial troubles deepened, Cavalieri was let go. It was the beginning of the end for the 2099 line, which included a quarterly anthology, **2099 Unlimited**.

Ravage, **Hulk** and **Punisher** had already been cancelled. Within months of their editor's departure the remaining titles were axed, replaced by **2099 World of Tomorrow**. This new title limped on for eight issues until its cancellation in 1997. A year later came **2099: Manifest Destiny**. A one-off, it was to be the line's swansong.

Man of British Steel

Fawlty Towers *star offers unique look at Superman UK-style, abetted by* ***Monty Python: The First 28 Years*** *author and* ***Uncanny X-Men*** *artists*



Above and below: Two interior pages from ***Superman: True Brit****, John Cleese and Kim 'Howard' Johnson's uniquely English take on the Man of Steel; art by John Byrne and Mark Farmer.*

IT seems a far cry from *Fawlty Towers* to Metropolis but the creator and star of the hugely popular BBC comedy is seeking to bridge the gap by bringing his intrinsically British sense of humour to a high profile *Elseworlds* project for DC.

In collaboration with Kim 'Howard' Johnson – author of **Monty Python: The First 28 Years** and other titles dedicated to the cult TV series – John Cleese is writing **Superman: True Brit**. A 96-page Britpack creation with art by Midlands-born John Byrne and fellow-Midlander Mark Farmer, it tells the story of the rocket carrying the baby Kal-El from the doomed planet Krypton landing in Somerset, appropriately in Weston-super-Mare.

Python invite

Discussing the project with **CI**, Johnson said it was the result of editor Mike Carlin telling him the door was open to any member of *Monty Python's Flying Circus* who wished to work in comics.

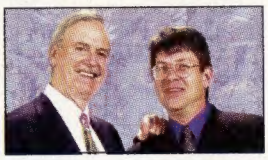
"When I went to work for John full-time in the fall of 2000," Johnson said, "we got to talking one day, and I mentioned Mike's long-standing offer. To my surprise, John said 'Sure, that sounds interesting'. But John knows next-to-nothing about the superhero world, which we decided is as much a strength as a weakness. Since I know much more than is healthy about the comicbook world, I suggested we could come up with something interesting by working together."

Tabloid press

"I thought that Superman was the obvious character to feature, for several reasons, not the least of which is that he is one of the few superheroes John was familiar with," he added. "I wanted to come up with a basic storyline that would best be served by John's input, and it seemed like having Superman land in Weston-super-Mare was a good start.

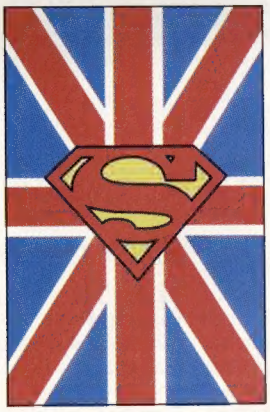
"And so that is indeed what I suggested to him as a springboard – what if Superman grew up in modern-day Britain? And he quipped 'Well, he'd obviously be run out of the country by the tabloid press!' We laughed at that, and it became the other germ of an idea from which the story grew."

Above: A John Byrne/Mark Farmer interior page from ***Superman: True Brit****. Below: John Cleese (left) and Kim 'Howard' Johnson, the authors of the 96-page DC hardcover graphic novel.*



Colin Kent

"Once that angle took root, lots of other ideas presented themselves," Johnson added. "As sleazy as some of these tabloids are, they dominate the landscape of the British press to a large extent, and so the odds are that young Colin Kent – as he is known growing up in Britain – would end up as a journalist working for a tabloid newspaper. And so, as the tabloids inevitably take aim at Superman, Colin finds himself in the peculiar position of having to savage his own alter ego to earn a living!"



Above: The cover to DC's $24.95 ***Superman: True Brit*** *hardcover, which ships October 13.*

Asked how he and Cleese worked together, Johnson said, "John likes to say that his contribution consisted mostly of helping me with the story, but it's actually much more than that. Many aspects of the story were suggested by him. Others were inspired by him, but I don't think I can mention those without giving away too many surprises.

"John also pored over each draft of the script with me," he added. "He's very meticulous, going over literally every word. Most people don't realize how logical a writer he is, whether he's writing sketches, speeches or essays, everything has to unfold logically. He would often challenge me about various sequences, and more often than not, he was right."

Madcap humour

In closing, Johnson said, "We wanted it to be funny, hopefully with the humour springing largely from the characters, and we wanted to tell a real story. Zany madcap humour alone will not hold a 92-page story together."

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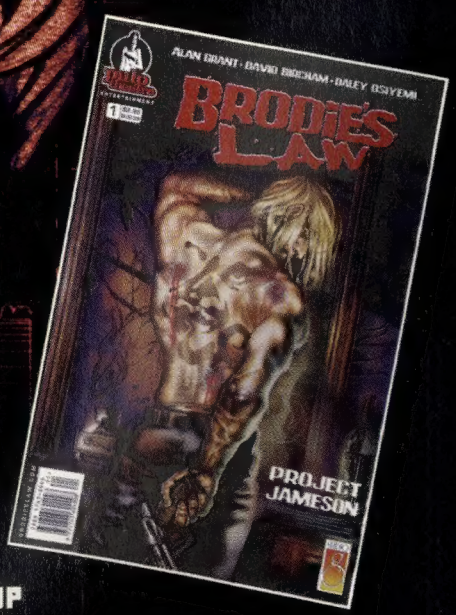

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Texeira wields Pscythe

THE ARTIST who drew the early issues of the Marvel Knights **Black Panther** series is now developing a creator-owned project for Image.

Mark Texeira's **Pscythe** will make a modest debut as a two-issue miniseries. The writer/artist described the book by saying, "Following the end of Lucifer's war, his legions of fallen angels were banished to Hell to suffer an eternity for their actions. For one of those fallen, its suffering is about to end."

Bounty hunter

"Pscythe, once one of the most powerful angelic entities, is granted a chance at redemption," Texeira added. "But to do so, it must inhabit the subconsciousness of a human being in order to understand and appreciate the lessons on Earth that it did not learn in the past.

"Without her knowing about it, Angela Zirtaeb, a novice bounty hunter, is chosen to be that vessel; placing her in the middle of a spiritual struggle for Pscythe's allegiance," he continued.

*Above: **Industry of War** is featured on the back cover to Mark Texeira's **Pscythe** #1; art by Jordan Raskin. A 40-pager, the $3.95 flip-book ships from Image on September 8.*

Pscythe is planned as a series of minis and Texeira is already at work on his three-issue follow-up to the first series, which consists of two 40-pagers in the flip-book format.

Industry of War

The 'back' 16 pages of each black and white issue are devoted to Jordan Raskin's **Industry of War** on which the **Predator: Race War** artist is joined by co-writer Andrew Lelling.

It follows two undercover military agents who hunt down missing malfunctioning bio-symbiotic weaponry. Manufactured for foot soldiers, one has fallen into the hands of civilians.

*Above: The cover to Image's **Pscythe** #1; art by Mark Texeira.*

Manhunter; take six

FOR more than six decades, a Manhunter has played a small but significant role in the DC Universe.

Over the years since the first hero of that name was introduced in 1941, several have adopted the alter ego *[see below]*. Now, for the first time, it is being taken on by a woman, Kate Spencer, who debuts in the first issue of her own **Manhunter** series.

The monthly – drawn by the **Midnight, Mass** art team of Jesús Saiz and Jimmy Palmiotti – is written by Marc Andreyko, who was previously attached to DC's aborted revival of Tower's **T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents**. He told **CI** that his version of Manhunter is not connected to any of its predecessors. "We will, eventually, begin acknowledging parts of the legacy of the name; specifically I hope to do something with Paul Kirk, who is still using the name and running around with the Power Company."

*Above: Jae Lee's cover for the second issue of DC's latest **Manhunter** title. The $2.95 series cold-launches on August 18.*

Death penalty

As for his version of Manhunter, Andreyko, who collaborated with Brian Michael Bendis on **Torso** and with P. Craig Russell on **Dr Strange - What Is It That Disturbs You, Stephen?**, said, "Kate Spencer is a top federal prosecutor, one who specialises in supervillains – meta-human crime – but she gets to a point where she's sick of seeing these lunatics getting off on technicalities. Or being sent to Arkham Asylum, only to escape again and kill more people.

"She's a lawyer, working for the government, for the greater good of society. But now she's killing a segment of that society – albeit her victims don't contribute much to the common good. So if you look at it logically, she's actually become what she abhors," Andreyko noted.

"**Manhunter** allows me to address a lot of issues that are inherent in the concept of vigilantism that aren't really touched upon with any regularity," he explained.

"I don't necessarily like Kate and I don't agree with all her points of view. For me it's about exploring my feelings on things like the death penalty; the injustice in deciding who has a right to live and who doesn't," he concluded.

The Manhunter Legacy: 60 years and counting

THE FIRST DC hero to be known as Manhunter was Paul Kirk, who Ed Moore introduced in **Adventure Comics** #58 [1941].

He was supplanted by Joe Simon and Jack Kirby's Rick Nelson – whose name was soon changed, possibly by editorial intervention, to Paul Kirk – in 1942's #73.

Kirk's exploits, ending in **Adventure Comics** #92 [1944], ran concurrently with those of a Manhunter in Quality's **Police Comics** [#8-101; 1942-50]. Created for Quality by Tex Blaisdell and Alex Kotzky, he was subsumed into the DC Universe when DC acquired Quality in 1956.

After 23 Manhunter-less years, Kirk was reworked by Archie Goodwin and Walt Simonson for a cult seven-parter starting in **Detective Comics** #437 [1973].

Although never named, the next Manhunter was intended by Kirby also to be Paul Kirk. Along with his replacement, Mark Shaw, Kirk was reintroduced in 1975 for one issue in the tryout title **First Issue Special** #5, while Shaw went on to gain his own 24-issue **Manhunter** title, albeit a full 13 years later.

But before then, in 1977, Steve Englehart turned the Manhunter concept on its head. In **Justice League of America** #141, he introduced the Manhunters as android predecessors of the Green Lantern Corp who had gone rogue. The saga explained the relationship of all of DC's Manhunters. Spanning time and space, it culminated in 1988's eight-part **Millennium**, with the extinction of the androids, who had sought to destroy mankind.

Spinning out of the *Zero Hour* story arc, Chase Lawler next took up the mantle in 1994 for 13 **Manhunter** issues. Now Kate Spencer has become the latest to adopt a name that carries a heritage going back more than 60 years.

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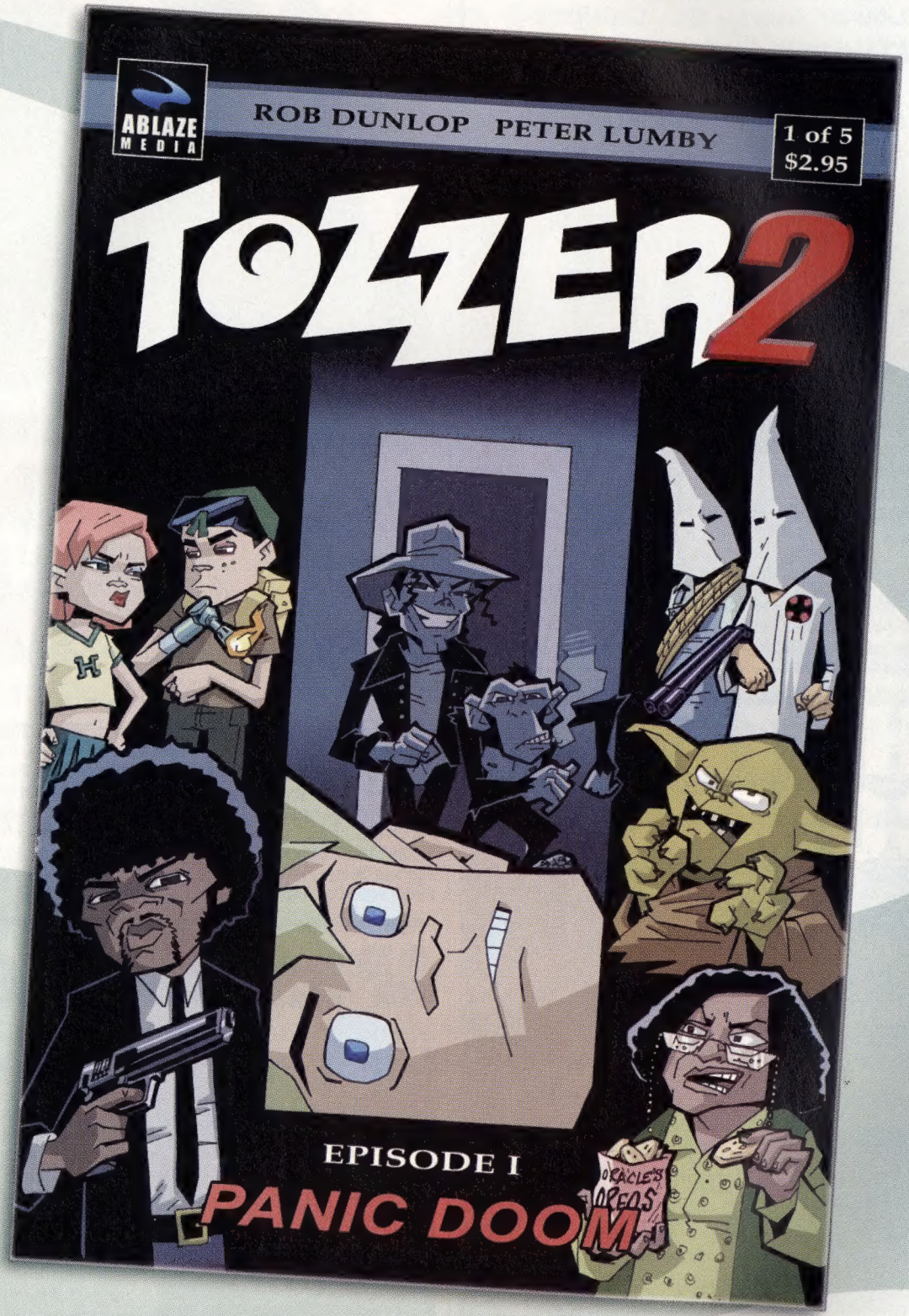

Tozzer is **back!** This October, Ablaze Media launches the sequel to the hit book of 2002. Rob Dunlop and Peter Lumby have created a 5-part mini series bursting with clever gags and pop culture craziness. Meet a whole new menagerie of stars, like **Mad Jax**, the notorious monkey molester, **Jules**, the gun-toting head of security, and **Luke Gorgeous**, the film director with the immaculate hairdo. You'll never look at Hollywood the same way again!

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released monthly - issue 1 listed in August Previews - order through your local comic shop

www.tozzer.com also available: *Tozzer and the Invisible Lap Dancers* (OGN) - 80 pages, full colour, A5 format, £5.99 - STAR73203

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*SHOWN above is Jim Silke's cover to his 96-page **PinUp: The Illegitimate Art**. The follow up to his 1995 book, **Bettie Page: Queen of Hearts**, the 9x12" softcover is a first person account of the **Rascals in Paradise** creator's life as a glamour artist. It covers his career as a music industry art director, magazine publisher, glamour photographer (during which time he photographed some of Hollywood's most beautiful starlets and models) and as a screenwriter and a comicbook artist. Lavishly illustrated, it features not only new work by Silke but also images by such classic pinup artists as George Petty, Coby Whitmore, Enoch Bolles, Al Parker and Rolf Armstrong. **PinUp** ships from Dark Horse on October 27, priced $19.95*

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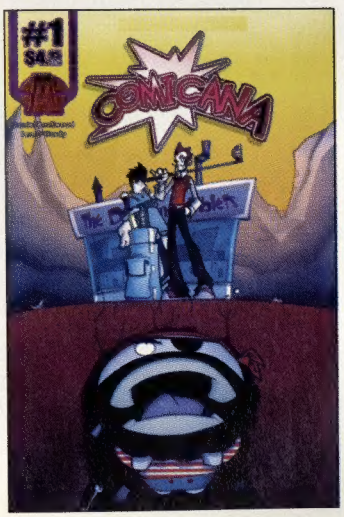
AP nabs Comicana



*Above: The cover to **Comicana**; art by Daniel Boultwood. The 40-page AP Comics title ships in September, priced $4.95.*

INSTANTLY recognisable as the name of an established central London comics shop, **Comicana** is also now the title of Daniel **(Njin)** Boultwood's first AP Comics project.

The former com.x artist told **CI** it is set both in Hell and in a London comics shop. He had not originally known of the real Comicana but says that, having now spoken to them, they have no problem with the comic.

Boultwood added that the main characters are Matt, a chain smoking depressive who has a bitter streak caused by his inability to work in comics and talk to women, and Craig – "a loving chunky fanboy who may have questionable hygiene standards. I like to think of them as the Cannon and Ball of the comics world."

Also featured are Father Dooling and his streetwise nun and the Devil, who, says the writer/artist, "takes the form of your favourite thing in the world and then destroys you."

SPIDER-MAN 2

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Marvel Comics Artist

Staz Johnson

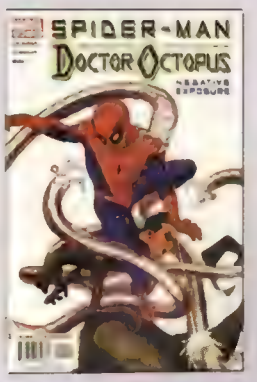
will be appearing at OK Comics to sign copies of his Spider-Man and Doctor Octopus graphic novel 'Negative Exposure', Batman vs Aliens 2 and the comic book adaptation of the new Spider-Man movie.

He'll be chatting, providing sketches, posing for photographs and selling original artwork from midday on

SATURDAY 17TH JULY

SPIDER-MAN 2 OPENING WEEKEND

Staz Johnson has worked in the comic industry for over 10 years and illustrated characters such as Transformers, Batman and most recently Spider-Man. He has also become well known as the comic book advisor on the Channel 4 TV series 'Zero to Hero'.



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In Brief

THE SANDMAN's Neil Gaiman is developing his 1996 BBCtv series Neverwhere as a Vertigo miniseries.

No artist is yet attached to the unscheduled project, which the writer previously adapted as a 1997 novel. Jim Henson Productions also has a feature film version of Gaiman's fantasy story in development with Cube's Vincenzo Natali signed on to direct from a screenplay by Matt Drake.

IDW HAS been forced to pull its 80-page ***Will Eisner's John Law: Dead Man Walking*** trade paperback from the schedule as a result of writer/artist Gary Chaloner's ill-health.

Originally lined up for June, the $12.99 black and white softcover will now be resolicited upon its completion.

DC HAS placed America's Best Comics' ***Promethea*** inker Mick Gray under an exclusive two-year contract.

THE ***SWORD of Dracula*** team of Jason Henderson and artist Greg Scott are returning to Image this August for the $2.95 ***Sylvia Faust***, which the writer describes as "a four-issue romantic comedy – a New York story with magic — about Sylvia and Tim Klass, two people from totally different worlds.

"Sylvia is an early-20s princess from another dimension who's basically a refugee here because she doesn't want to marry the son of an evil Duke back home," Henderson explained. "She has a cockeyed vocabulary and emotions so strong her sadness makes frogs rain from the sky."

BATMAN: Gotham Knights' Scott Beatty is spotlighting a fifth DC hero for Dorling Kindersley.

In the same pictorial style as his volumes on Batman, the JLA, Superman and Wonder Woman, the $19.99 ***Catwoman: The Visual Guide to the Feline Fatale*** is being released in August to tie-in with the US premiere of the Halle Berry-starring Catwoman movie. A 64-pager, the 10x11¾" hardcover will also be available in the UK, priced £12.99.

WILDSTORM'S currently unscheduled ***Razor's Edge*** is to kick off by featuring former WildC.A.T.s member Warblade in a serial by Three Kings screenwriter John Ridley and ***Batman/Judge Dredd: Judgment on Gotham***'s Simon Bisley.

It is understood that, although intended as a standalone mini, Ed (***Sleeper***) Brubaker and Jason (***Body Bags***) Pearson's ***Redbird*** is now a candidate for the WildStorm monthly showcase title which will run multi-episode stories.

"Harry Potter meets Star Wars"

Death of Captain Marvel *writer/artist tries for cosmic Spider-Man with Dynamite series*

THE CREATOR responsible for popularising **Warlock** and **Captain Marvel** at Marvel in the 1970s and for creating such galaxy-spanning concepts as **Dreadstar** and **Cosmic Odyssey** is writing and drawing the second series from Dynamite Entertainment, the imprint recently set up by Dynamic Forces with Devil's Due Publishing.

Describing his **Cosmic Guard** to **CI**, Jim Starlin likened it to **Harry Potter** meets *Star Wars* "or maybe C C Beck's Captain Marvel on acid," he added.

Green Lantern

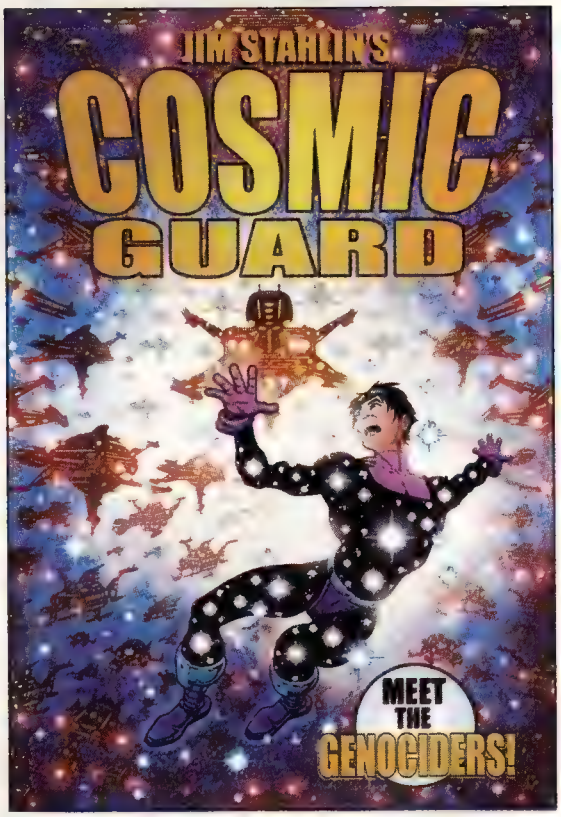
"Everyone seems to already have their idea of what the book's about without having seen it yet," he remarked bitterly before continuing the comparisons theme. "I've already been accused of ripping off the Green Lantern Corps, which you might say is true, except there's no power rings or little blue guys and Kid Kosmos is the only member of the Guard that's not an electronic ghost. But other than that it's just like the Green Lantern Corps. Right.

"In essence **Cosmic Guard** is my attempt to do a story about a kid that is not geared to kids. This too I am already getting a lot a grief on because all the old **Impulse** and **Superboy** fans are saying I'm dissing their favourite characters, even though if you go back and reread those books the writing is clearly directed toward a teenage audience."

Lee and Ditko

Starlin says he is aiming for something akin to Stan Lee and Steve Ditko's **Amazing Spider-Man** stories, which, he maintains, were geared to a contemporary adult audience and attracted teenagers because of the quality of the product. "Basically what I'm trying for is a cosmic Spider-Man. Now all the legions of Spider-Man fans can write in with angry responses."

Moving on to the basic premise of the series, the writer/artist who also wrote and drew the groundbreaking **Death of Captain Marvel** [1982] explained that Ray Torres is Kid Kosmos – although he does not get that name until the second story arc. "He's a suicidal 12-year old orphan, who becomes a 16-year old protector of the universe. And then there's the Kid's predecessor – the Dark Paladin – who's dead and teaches Ray how to be a Guardsman."



Above: The cover to ***Cosmic Guard*** *#2 Top: A double-page spread from the first issue of the Devil's Due/Dynamite Entertainment series, which is written and drawn by Jim Starlin.*

Asked about the theme of **Cosmic Guard**, Starlin, who stated he's trying for a mood of lighthearted mirth punctuated by grim seriousness, replied somewhat enigmatically, "There's no success without belief and that everyone should get past it and move on."

Cosmic Guard *#1, priced $2.95, ships in August.*

India's Spider-Man

Asian sub-continent's Marvel publisher expunges science in favour of myth for launch of home-grown web-slinger

A COMPLETELY new Spider-Man is about to hit the shops but Westerners are going to have to wait a while to read his adventures.

The new version of Marvel's flagship hero is the brainchild of Bangalore-based Gotham Entertainment. The leading comics publisher in South Asia – it releases English, Hindi, Bengali, Tamil and Malayalam editions of Marvel and DC titles – has acquired the rights to recreate the character for the Indian market.

Reworking the Stan Lee and Steve Ditko concept from the ground up is Jeevan J Kang. Gotham's studio head, he is writing, pencilling, inking and colouring the initial four-part series. **Spider-Man India** is his first published comics work.

Outlining the differences between Marvel's and his company's versions of the web-slinger, Gotham president and chief executive officer, Sharad Devarajan said, "Although we will remain true to the underlining mythos of Spider-Man, which is epitomised in the phrase 'With great power comes great responsibility', the character will be reinvented so his powers, problems and costume are more integrated with Indian culture. Unlike the US origin which is deeply rooted in science, the Indian version is rooted more in magic and mythology."

Above: Mumbai-based Spider-Man India as depicted by Jeevan J Kang.

Mythical demon

"This version of Spider-Man will gain his powers from an ancient mystic in order to combat the evil threat of the Green Goblin, who will also be reinvented as a modern day Indian demon from myth," added Devarajan.

● The launch of **Spider-Man India** is being scheduled to tie-in with the Indian premiere of *Spider-Man 2*. A North American release of the title is to follow.

Archie's Fly buzzes back

Above: The cover to the 1959 first issue of Archie's **Adventures of the Fly**; art by Joe Simon and Jack Kirby.

IN 1959 Archie Comics hired Joe Simon and Jack Kirby to get it back into the superhero market it had entered 20 years before, as MLJ.

The result was the Shazam-like **Adventures of the Fly** featuring Tommy Troy, a young orphan given a special ring by an emissary of the Fly World which magically transforms him into the adult superhero. Predating Spider-Man by three years, he also gained the proportionate strength of his namesake, the ability to walk up walls and a 'sixth sense' that warned him of impending danger.

Archie is to collect the first four issues of this seminal series in the latest of its Red Circle reprint series. A 96-page trade paperback, **The Adventures of the Fly** also reprints art contributions to the series by Jack Davis and Al Williamson.

***The Adventures of the Fly**, priced $12.95, ships on October 6.*

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In Brief

NOVELIST Jeff Mariotte is to step down as editor-in-chief of San Diego-based publisher IDW to focus on his writing.

Replacing Mariotte – who is developing another series of **Desperadoes** for IDW – is Chris Ryall, who is an advertising copywriter and editor-in-chief of *moviepoopshoot.com*, movie maker Kevin Smith's pop culture website. He takes over on August 1.

THE AGE of Wrath is the third volume in DreamWave's **Transformers: The War Within** saga.

Written by **Transformers** number one author Simon Furman and drawn by DreamWave staffer Joe Ng, the $2.95 six-parter begins in September.

SHIPPING in September, Topps' ***Star Wars Heritage*** trading card set is to encompass all six blockbuster movies, including a sneak peak at the as-yet untitled *Episode III*, which premieres in 2005.

CONTINUING to expand his writing credits, **Thundercats: Dogs of War**'s John Layman is developing an ongoing **Gambit** series for Marvel.

Joining the former WildStorm editor on what is the second attempt to set up the Cajun mutant as the star of his own monthly title is penciller Georges Jeanty, whose credits include **Weapon X** and **Bishop: The Last X-Man**. A $2.99 title, **Gambit** ships on September 1.

DEVIL'S Due publisher Josh Blaylock has been forced to delay the conclusion of his **Misplaced** four-parter.

"I apologise to the small loyal group of fans who support this book," said Blaylock. "I never wanted to get into this situation, but running the company takes so much time and concentration, something had to be put on the back burner, and since **Misplaced** is my 'vanity project,' it had to be the one."

Illustrated by Blaylock and Angelo Tsang, the $2.99 miniseries was launched through Image in May 2003 with #3 coming from Devil's Due in February. Blaylock is looking to ship the final issue before the end of the year.

CURRENTLY writing a four-issue **Iron Man** serial for Marvel, **Nowheresville**'s Mark Ricketts is also scripting a graphic novel for Dark Horse.

Illustrated by Horacio Domingues, an Argentinian artist making his US debut, the 128-page **Lazarus Jack** is the tale of a magician who seeks his family, lost when one of his spells backfired and sent them into a different dimension.

A $14.95 softcover, it ships on September 29.

*Above: Renato Guedes' interior art from IDW's 48-page **24: One Shot**.*

24: the comic

HOW TO reflect the passage of time in a comicbook is the challenge faced by Mark L. Haynes and J.C. Vaughn when they agreed to write a spin-off from TV series *24*.

The pressure of a looming deadline is a key ingredient of the show, which stars Kiefer Sutherland.

"One of the hardest things, initially, was how to deal with the real time element of the show and how we could handle 24 hours of action in 48 pages of comic," Haynes told **CI**. "The math notwithstanding, in the end it worked in our favour as it concentrates the action in a unique way and will truly leave the reader out of breath by the time they get to the end."

Outlining the premise of the show, Vaughn told **CI**, "CTU (Counter Terrorism Unit) agent Jack Bauer, is one seriously self-motivated Federal agent, who takes on the toughest assignments supported by a highly trained, equally dedicated staff of specialists. In *24* everything you can think of is thrown at Jack, and then some, and just when he's dealt with it they hit him with something else."

Drawn by **CSI: Miami – Thou Shalt Not...** artist Renato Guedes, IDW's **24: One Shot** is set 18 months before the first TV series, which aired in 2001.

Discussing the storyline of the book, Vaughn – who wrote the **Battlestar Galactica** comics for Realm Press where Haynes was his editor – revealed, "Moira O'Neal is a former member of an IRA splinter faction that has no use for the peace process. She, though, appears to have had a change of heart. Now her former colleagues want to kill her to keep her quiet and Jack is standing in the way."

***24: One Shot**, priced $6.99, ships in July.*

Russ Manning's Magnus collected

A 1963 series that became the foundation of the Valiant Universe almost 30 years later is the latest science fiction comicbook classic to be disinterred by Dark Horse.

Created by Russ Manning, who would go on to garner much acclaim for his work on the *Tarzan* newspaper strip between 1968 '79, Gold Key's **Magnus, Robot Fighter** was set in 4,000 AD. It featured a hero, described by the writer/artist as Tarzan of the Future, who was the only man who could save the human race from the robots that threatened to enslave it.

The complete Manning run – which lasted only 21 issues before recycling his early work – will be collected in a 200-page hardback. A follow up to the publisher's earlier **Mac Raboy's Flash Gordon** trade paperback series and its September-shipping **M.A.R.S. Patrol Total War** softcover, the 6¼x10¼" volume includes stories written by Kermit Schaefer and Don Friewald as well as by Manning.

Although Valiant reissued some of the Gold Key stories in its short-lived **Vintage Magnus, Robot Fighter** series, Manning's entire work on the Gold Key title has never been reprinted before.

● Dark Horse has put its 224-page **Al Williamson Hidden Lands** trade paperback back on the schedules.

Originally solicited for November 2002, the black and white anthology will now ship on October 27. Priced $22.95, the 8½x11" volume features strips drawn – mainly for Atlas – in the 1950s by Williamson, an artist lauded for his SF work.

*Above: Classic Russ Manning cover art to Dark Horse's 200-page **Magnus, Robot Fighter**. A hardback, it ships on October 27, priced $49.95.*

Three go to Europe

THE intriguingly titled **Follow Me Closely** is Daniel Krall's one-man follow up to the 2001 Oni miniseries **One plus One**.

While he had previously collaborated with writer Neil Shaffer – Krall is now writing as well as drawing the 104-page black and white graphic novel, again for Oregon-based Oni Press.

It tells the story of Julian, a bored rich American kid who travels to Europe looking for kicks; plus Ben, the private detective hired to find him and Sadie, the assassin hired to kill him.

"**One plus One** was a blast to draw," Krall said, "but I did get a little tired of drawing a dirty city and seedy bars." Begging the question of where he had done his research he added, "**Follow Me Closely** allows me to indulge my fashion fetishes and create a neo-mod world, like in the film *CQ*. Or maybe *Barbarella*.

"The story has evolved organically," he explained. "Initially, it was about Julian searching for more to life and finding it in spades, but as I wrote, his character didn't surprise me nearly as much as Sadie and Ben. So, the narrative I had about one person's journey became about the journey of three people, and it ended up much richer than expected."

*Above: Promotional art for Daniel Krall's **Follow Me Closely**, a 104-page Oni Press softcover in the manga/digest format.*

***Follow Me Closely**, priced $9.95, ships on July 21.*

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Barrucci celebrates tenth year on QVC TV

Dynamic Forces president looks forward to a second decade of monthly transAtlantic flights to promote comics

IN A hard-sell arena of gems, clothing and fashion accessories, on a TV channel aimed mainly at housewives, it seems unlikely a show dedicated to comics would last longer than a pilot outing. But this month, Nick Barrucci's Dynamic Forces celebrates its tenth anniversary on QVC TV.

The head of the New Jersey-based producer of trading cards, lithographs and limited edition comics explained to **CI** how he got such an opportunity. "With hard work and a little bit of luck, as clichéd as that may be. We were pursuing QVC UK for six to eight months and they finally decided to give us a try. When they did, they were very happy with the success and the new audience that we helped bring in."

On the audience size for his monthly show, Barrucci replied, "There are 12-14 million homes in the UK that receive QVC, and that's all we know. So we make the best with the potential audience we may have."

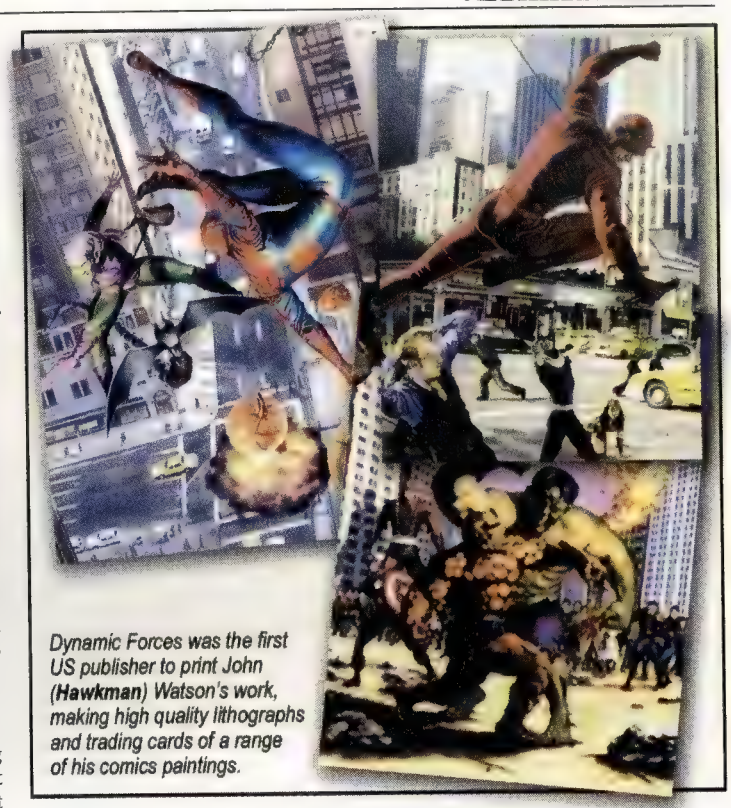
He admits to being a bundle of nerves until he goes on the air every show, but adds, "it's one of the most exciting things that I do – a rush that can't be duplicated!"

With no real rehearsal, Barrucci accepts that things can easily go awry on air. Once, during a *Planet of the Apes* show, the studio was set up with trees and rocks and he wanted to make a big entrance, with real impact. So, he hid behind the rocks, the red "on air" light went on, and he jumped up. But his foot got caught between the rocks, and he fell to the ground badly hurting his knees. "I was in pain for hours," he admitted. "But there was no calling it quits as we were on the air! The pain in my knees didn't match the embarrassment. That day, I didn't need any make-up, I was fully red in the face."

Blood soaked on air

On another occasion, he was walking down the hall to go on the air. He put his arms out, with his hand against the wall, "like a kid playing airborne ranger". But a nail was protruding where a picture had been. He slashed his hand and had to do the show with a big white towel soaked in blood, trying not to let anyone know. "Not exactly the most fun."

Adding variety to what is basically a 100% selling show, Barrucci has invited many celebrity comics guests on air. These have included Bruce Timm, Alex Ross and Mike Carlin. Plus, as he adds, "Rich Johnston(!), Andy Hartnell, Phil Winslade, John Cassaday and that Millar guy. He's an up and comer, that guy. I like what he does. You should read his stuff!"



*Dynamic Forces was the first US publisher to print John (**Hawkman**) Watson's work, making high quality lithographs and trading cards of a range of his comics paintings.*

With selling prices ranging from a few pounds to over £400 per item, he maintains, "It's all about bringing the coolest collectables on the air. But the two most important things are the support of the existing audience and the opportunity to broaden it. Without either, there's no show."

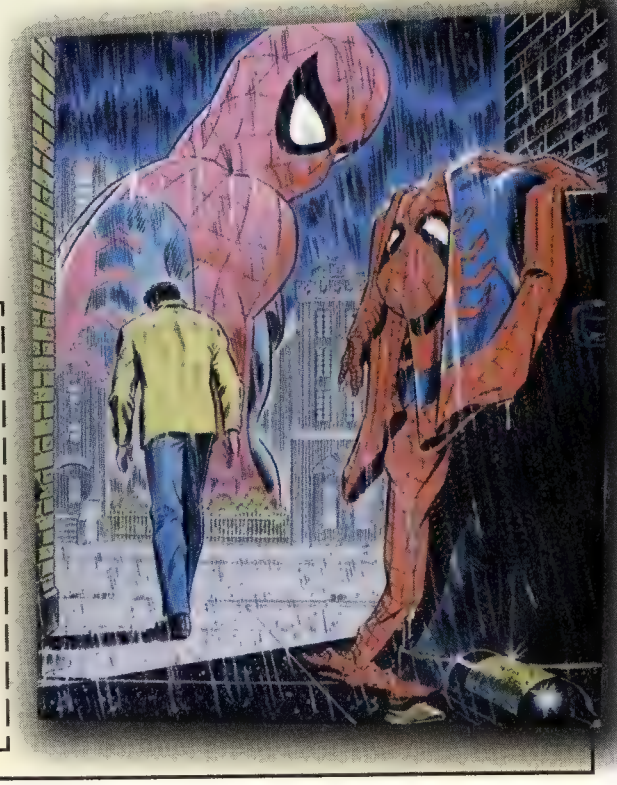
Answering a common criticism that the programme overinflates the value of comics, Barrucci said, "We make a very concerted effort not to promote the product as straight forward collectables with huge financial rewards. We try more for good value for money but at the same time fun to read, fun to enjoy, fun to collect. If not for the fun, the value is meaningless. Many times we open a signed book on air and show the fans the story, telling them if they like it they should pick up subsequent issues at their local comic shop. We also introduce starter packs on the air. They are great value for money, and fans get to experiment with new product. That's the only way to grow the market."

Win a limited edition John Romita lithograph

COURTESY of Dynamic Forces, we have TEN of their limited edition $40 John Romita Senior lithographs of his classic **Amazing Spider-Man #50** cover, "Spider-Man No More!".

This milestone moment in Spidey's life was so powerful that director Sam Raimi made it a major moment in his second Spider-Man movie!

Measuring 18x24", printed on archival 80lb silk stock, these fabulous prints are sitting in our office. Simply answer the following and clip out the coupon below and you could be one of the ten lucky winners.



What is the metal associated with a tenth anniversary?

BRONZE GOLD LEAD PLATINUM SILVER TIN

(please circle the correct answer; winners will be announced in CI #176)

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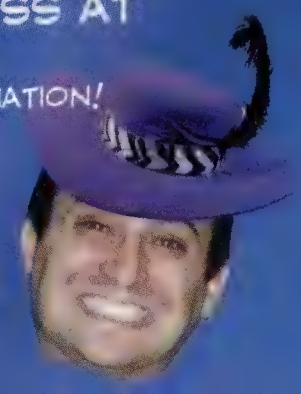

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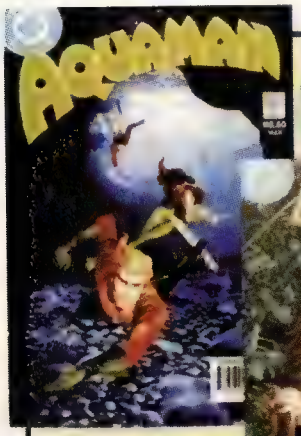

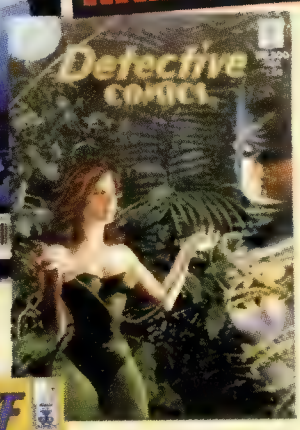

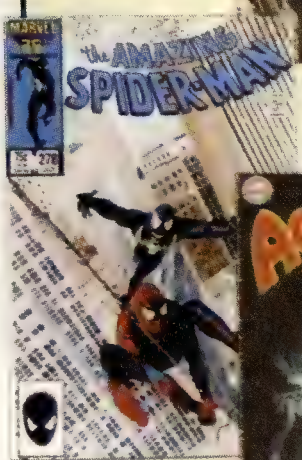

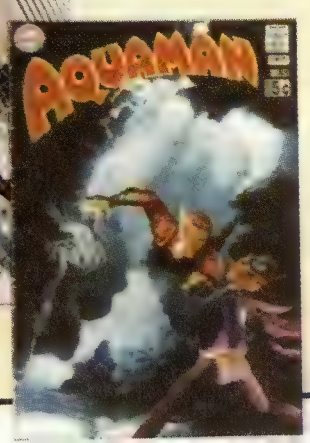

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Steve Niles piles on horror at IDW

GIVEN THE high volume of projects he has in the pipeline, it is hard to believe that current horror meister Steve Niles could squeeze in any more work. But two more IDW titles penned by him have been announced.

One of these, the 48-page **Horrorcide**, is an anthology featuring three of his short stories – one being illustrated by his **30 Days of Night** artist, Ben Templesmith. Of the other two, one has art by Josh Medors, who drew the **30 Days Of Night Annual**, while the third is drawn by Chee, who worked with Niles on **Dawn of the Dead**.

A $6.99 one-shot, it ships in September as does the 96-page **IDW Tales of Terror**.

Niles contributes two tales to this $16.99 hardcover; a *30 Days of Night* story drawn by Templesmith – who also provides a *Singularity 7* strip – and a *Dawn of the Dead* one with art by Chee. The book also contains two other strips – Beau Smith and Manuel Vidal's *Wynonna Earp* and *CVO* by Jeff Mariotte and Antonio Vasquez – as well as prose stories by horror authors including the prolific Scott Ciencin and relative newcomer John Urbancik.

Above: The cover to ***Horrorcide****, a 48-page IDW one-shot; art by Josh Medors.*

SHOWN above is art from one of the infamous Jack T. Chick religious tracts spotlighted in Fredrik Strömberg's 360-page ***The Comics go to Hell****. A 6x6" hardcover subtitled* ***A Visual History of the Devil in Comics****, the author's follow up to* ***Black Images in Comics*** *looks at the way the Prince of Darkness has been treated in titles as diverse as* ***Hellblazer****,* ***The New Adventures of Jesus****,* ***Donald Duck*** *and* ***Tintin****. Priced $18.95, it ships from Fantagraphics in October.*

50 years of Brit SF

THE London-based Cartoon Art Trust is to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the SF hero dubbed First Citizen of the British Sci-Fi Age, by hosting a talk with his creator.

Sydney Jordan will discuss his *Jeff Hawke* strip, which ran in **The Daily Express** for over 20 years, on July 14 from 6.30-7.30pm. Call 0207 278 7172 for full details.

Above: Jeff Hawke by Syd Jordan.

Valentino revives ShadowHawk

FOLLOWING his recent revival of **normalman**, Jim Valentino is bringing another of his creations out of mothballs.

Unseen since 1995, ShadowHawk is to star in an aptly-titled Image Comics one-off written and drawn by Valentino *[see art below]*, who recently stepped down as publisher of the California-based co-operative.

Speaking with **CI** about **The Return of ShadowHawk**, Valentino said, "The story is called *Legacy*. It's derived from the Alan Moore penned origin story that appeared in **ShadowHawks of Legend** in 1995."

Hero legacy

"In it," the writer/artist explained, "Eddie Collins, the current ShadowHawk – a high school senior who lives with his widower father, James, in New York City – discovers the legacy of ShadowHawk and why he is different from all those who came before him.

"This is a much different character from Paul Johnstone [who first appeared as ShadowHawk in 1992's **Youngblood** #2], whom, as we recall, was dying of AIDS," added Valentino, who helped co-found Image after a long run writing and drawing **Guardians of the Galaxy** for Marvel. "Eddie is bright, young, healthy and something more. That's the key to how and why he's able to use the armour in a heretofore unguessed manner. And, no, he does not break backs."

Image All-Stars

Valentino, who said the one-shot is also to feature a retrospective of the character's history and appearances to bring new readers up to speed, continued, "This ShadowHawk is scheduled to appear in two different super-groups within the next year; the previously announced [Erik] Larsen-inspired **Image All-Stars** – alongside Spawn, Witchblade and the Dragon – and a new team that I'll be doing of Image 'kid heroes' called **The Pact**.

"We haven't seen a ShadowHawk book in several years and this seemed to be the time to acquaint readers with him and provide the back story for other writers to jump off from," added Valentino, who said details of **The Pact** would be forthcoming at a later date. "Also, I seem to be revisiting old characters, first normalman, now ShadowHawk, hopefully within the next year **A Touch of Silver**, but we'll see."

The Return of ShadowHawk *#1, priced $2.99, ships on September 29.*

In Brief

THE FIRST issue of **Marvel Comics** – subsequently **Marvel Mystery Comics** – was published by Timely in 1939 and Marvel is celebrating that milestone with a reprint of what is considered the very first comicbook crossover.

Its 48-page **Marvel 65th Anniversary Special** features the battle between the Human Torch and the Sub-Mariner that raged across issues #8 to 10 of that seminal series. With separate chapters written and drawn by Bill Everett and Carlos Burgos, the $4.99 one-shot ships on September 22.

MARVEL is also adding a **Golden Age Marvel Comics** title to its **Marvel Masterworks** line.

The initial 264-page volume reprints the first four issues of **Marvel Mystery Comics**. A $49.99 hardcover, it ships on September 29.

DABEL Brothers Productions is on the move again.

After starting out in 2002 under the Image 'I' as Roaring Studios, the company also known as DBPro has ended its brief publishing arrangement with Devil's Due.

No alternative outlet has yet been announced although it is understood that its current miniseries – **Dragonlance: The Legend of Huma** and **The Hedge Knight** – are to be concluded by the Chicago-based publisher.

DC HAS signed J H Williams III to a two-year exclusive contract.

The **Promethea** artist's first project under the deal is to be **Desolation Jones**. Written by Warren Ellis, the WildStorm series launches in 2005.

IMAGE is to begin publishing Raven Gregory's Overcast Comics title, **The Gift** as of #8, which ships in October.

Drawn by Tyler Kirkham, who also illustrates Image/Top Cow's **Strykeforce** revamp, the $2.95 series follows the Ancient One, a mysterious being with questionable motives, who bestows items of incredible power on normal everyday people. The personality of the recipient determines how they use their Gift.

"But the Gifts themselves have an almost monkey's paw effect," Gregory explained. "In that, just because these people are given these great powers doesn't necessarily mean that everything is going to turn out all right."

ANNOUNCING his decision to quit **X-Men**, Chuck Austen said, "Marvel has changed its internal policies about what is, and is not acceptable in their comics, and I was finding it very difficult to write that way."

The writer's last issue is the December-shipping #164.

PERSEPOLIS 2 *is Paris-based Marjane Satrapi's black and white sequel to one of the best-selling graphic novels in the US in 2003. Published by Pantheon on August 31, the $17.95 hardcover continues where her autobiographical* ***Persepolis*** *left off. Subtitled* ***The Story of a Return****, the 9¼x6¼" volume picks up in 1984 with the then 15-year-old Iranian-born cartoonist fleeing fundamentalism and the war with Iraq to begin a new life in Vienna. It follows her until she eventually chooses to return home. But Iran has changed while she has been away and the repression and state-sanctioned chauvinism lead her to question whether she can have a future in the country.*

Heroes without powers

ARE THE characters in the Marvel Universe heroes because of the powers they possess or because of the people they are? That is the question newcomers Matt Cherniss and Peter Johnson are out to answer in a six-issue Marvel miniseries.

Discussing **Powerless** – which is drawn by Michael (**Alias**) Gaydos – Cherniss told **CI**, "We felt that the best way to explore this idea would be to place our favourite characters in our world, without powers, and tell the same iconic stories but in very real terms."

Pictured: Michael Gaydos art from the $2.99 first issue of Marvel's ***Powerless*** *six-parter.*

Claiming that any comparison with a **What If...?** story is merely superficial, the writer said "First of all, we have created an entire world with its own history from which we explore some very significant themes.

"I know Marvel hates the word deconstruction when it comes to their heroes, but we are really digging down to the core of who these people are and where they draw their strength. I don't think that a **What If...?** story ever really gives you greater insight into a character like this series will," he added.

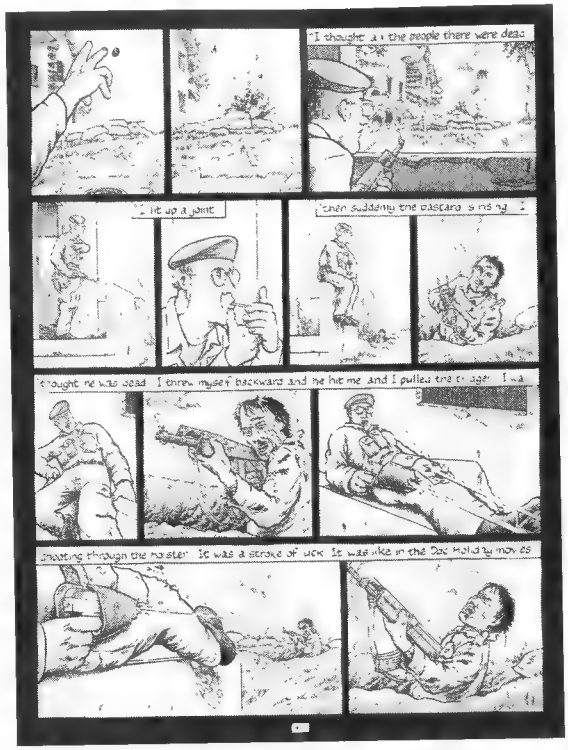
Return to Bosnia

Joe Sacco's follow up to ***Safe Area Gorazde*** *chronicles* ***The Fixer****'s version of events during Balkan conflict*

AFTER reporting events in Sarajevo in his graphic novel, **Safe Area Gorazde** [2002] Joe Sacco *[pictured]* is returning to that war-torn Bosnian city to tell the story of Neven, the man who took him under his wing on his first visit.

Originally published in 2003 by Drawn & Quarterly, **The Fixer** is to get a UK release through Jonathan Cape on August 5. A 112-pager, the black and white 7¾x10½" softcover, which is subtitled **A Story from Sarajevo**, is priced £12.99.

Asked to define a fixer, the Maltese-born cartoonist explained, "There are many kinds, but generally they're people who can translate well, are knowledgeable about the local scene and can make introductions and make things happen for you."


I thought all the people there were dead
lit up a joint
Then suddenly the bastard is moving
thought he was dead I threw myself backwards and he hit me and I pulled the trigger I was
shooting through the master It was a stroke of luck It was like in the Doc Holiday movies

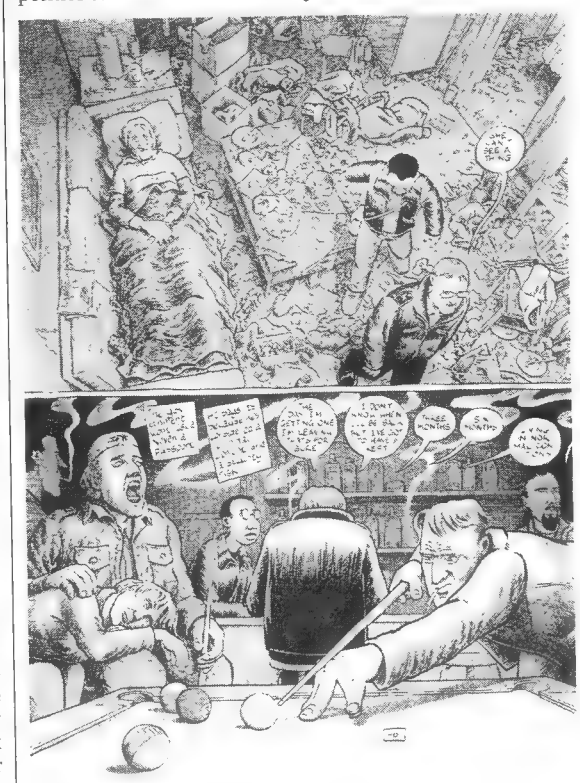
Political influence

"With Neven, I could've said, 'Take me to the 5th Army Corps and get me an interview with a general,' and he probably could've arranged it," added Sacco, a pioneer in using comics as a journalistic medium. "A fixer can really influence a journalist's story in that his or her politics can determine which stories they introduce you to.

"They can steer you in a particular direction or not translate specific things and there's no way you can know they're doing it," he explained. "One point I wanted to make with this book is that journalists are dependent on these people, for good or bad.

"I can't know for sure if Neven was telling the truth, but my tendency was to believe him, and I think he gave me an accurate overall picture of what happened," he added. "However, I always had to remember that it was through Neven's filter."

As to why someone might become a fixer, Sacco said, "They're often people who enjoy talking to foreigners and want to improve their English, but mostly it's money that makes them do it. When I was in Bosnia a fixer could make $150 a day, which was more than most people there were seeing in a year.



Pictured: Interior pages from Joe Sacco's ***The Fixer****, a Drawn & Quarterly graphic novel published in the UK by Jonathan Cape.*

Street cred

As for Neven, Sacco said, "It's hard to describe him with a single adjective because he's complicated. I didn't know anyone in Sarajevo on my first visit, and Neven was the first person I spoke to.

"In his way he took me under his wing. I appreciated that because he was a tough guy and I was a little afraid when I was there. It was good to be around this guy because it felt like his street credibility was rubbing off on me on some level. It wasn't until later that I learned he didn't have street credibility with everyone," Sacco concluded.

Elric's early life revealed

IT HAS taken 43 years but Michael Moorcock is finally to chronicle the formative years of the albino wizard he introduced in a 1961 issue of **Science Fantasy** magazine.

In collaboration with **Thor**'s Walter Simonson, the renowned fantasy author is to reveal all in DC's **Elric: The Making of a Sorcerer**, which consists of four 48-page prestige format issues.

Although a number of Moorcock's Elric novels have been adapted into comics over the years, this is the first time he has written a story specifically for the medium. Referring to those earlier comics – which were published by Marvel, Epic, Pacific, First and Dark Horse/Topps, Simonson told **CI**, "I read many of the comic adaptations as they were originally coming out over the years but haven't gone back to review them seriously. None of the artists who have worked on Elric in the past, as good as they were, are artists who had a particular influence on my own drawing so I haven't referenced their work on this project. I probably know P Craig Russell's version of Elric best and I did look at a few of his issues to see what he had done with helmets, swords, armour and so on.

"But I've pretty much gone off on my own, in terms of design, using Michael's rather elegant prose descriptions in the scripts as my springboards," the artist explained. "And I haven't been using art from the various book covers of Elric as source material. But I did look at some of the previous versions of Elric in comics to review the logos to see what had been done in that direction.

"The only deliberate reference I've made to past visualisations in my own art is that since the four issues I'm drawing are set apart by great passages of time and occur in different eras, I'm doing more than one version of Stormbringer, Elric's black runesword," the artist added. "Michael's Elric reality is so liquid in the first place that I thought the variations would be nice echoes of its malleability. And it gives me a chance to do a small nod to previous conceptualisations of the character."

Elric: The Making of a Sorcerer #1, priced $5.95, ships on September 22.

CI #172 competition winners

IN **CI** #172, five readers were each offered the opportunity to each win copies of Titan Books' **Caught in the Web** and **Comic Creators on Spider-Man**. The winners were:

Adrian Torson, Macclesfield, Cheshire
Simon Finnegan, Bromford Bridge, Birmingham
Elizabeth Owen, Willenhall, West Midlands
Maurice Cranbourne, Watford, Hertfordshire
Andrew Mountford, Morpeth, Northumberland

Reader votes scored the 10 most popular sections of the issue as:

1 News International (21.9%)
2 Reviews (11.5%)
3 Spider-Man 2 feature (8.4%)
4 Letters/Comic Cuts (5.9%)
5 Frame to Frame (5.2%)
6 Advance Listings (5.1%)
7 Sez Dez (5%)
8 Spider-Man competition (4.9%)
9 Q&A (4.3%)
10 Comment (4.2%)

The highest scoring section as the least popular feature was "None, they're all fine" – very encouraging at 28.5%, with Novel Graphics second at 15.8% and Comics Economics third at 11.1%.

Satan to quit

THE LATEST title from a Swindon-based indie is a one-shot, which reveals how the Devil feels after spending an eternity as an outcast.

The Confessional is the work of two newcomers – Chris McCay and artist Lee O'Connor. A Warpton 40-pager, it begins when a man enters the confessional in a Roman Catholic church.

When addressed by the priest, the middle-aged man confesses he is the Devil, who no longer wants his job. After being God's Adversary for the last four million years – as it is measured on Earth – he is tired of his role. He has no desire to continue.

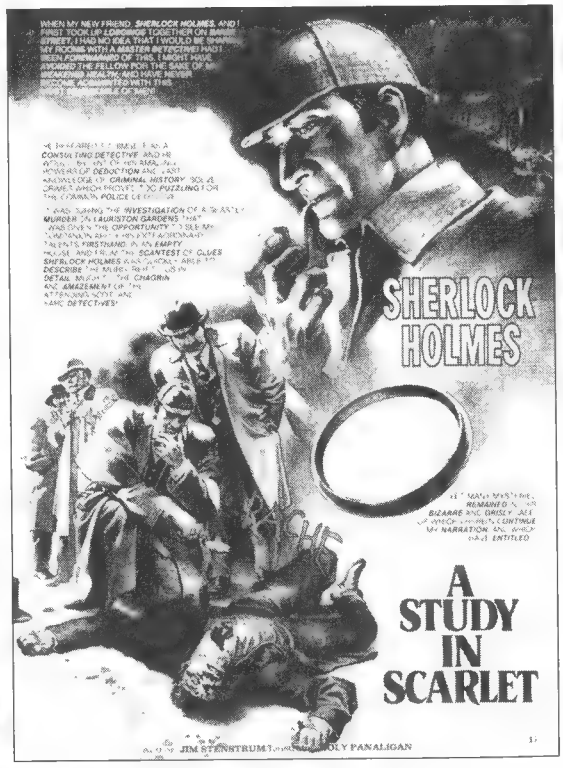
The priest believes Satan defines God – like light and darkness, black and white, good and evil – for one to exist, there must be its polar opposite. He cannot allow the Great Deceiver to quit.

But how do you get the Devil to change his mind?

The Confessional, priced £2.99/$6.95, ships in August.

*Above: The cover to Warpton's Comics' 40-page one-shot, **The Confessional**; art by Anthea Dilley.*

Warren artist dies



NOLY Panaligan died on June 22 as a result of heart failure.

At the age of 16, Panaligan began studying art under Francisco V. Coching, who he considered to be the Philippine's best and greatest komiks illustrator. He got his break in 1946 when his mentor recommended him to be an artist on **Halakhak Komiks**, the Philippine's first serialised comicbook.

Continuing to work on Filipino comics, eventually he wrote and drew *Payaso* – considered by many to be his masterpiece – for **Tagalog Klasiks** [1953].

Although he eventually moved on to advertising and then animation, he did not drop completely out of comics. Working through Tony DeZuniga and Nestor Redondo, in the 1970s he contributed to a number of DC titles among them **Jonah Hex** and to Warren's **Vampirella** *[art above]*.

In Brief

YOU HAVE to admire Rob Liefeld, really – he just doesn't give up.

With his Mark Millar-written **Youngblood: Bloodsport** following an all-too familiar haphazard schedule, the one-time fan favourite artist has announced **Invincible**'s Robert Kirkman is to write a monthly **Youngblood** series. Set to launch in September, it is drawn by **Demonslayer**'s Marat Mychaels, who illustrated several projects for Liefeld's Extreme Studios in the 1990s.

IT IS not getting any better for CrossGen, which has now applied for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection.

The application revealed the Florida-based publisher has debts of $3.4 million of which almost half is owed to Quebecor, the major printer of comicbooks for the US market.

UDON Studios has acquired the licences to two more Capcom video games.

Already publishing a **Street Fighter** comic through Devil's Due, the artistic co-operative is developing **Darkstalkers** and **Rival Schools** as ongoing titles launching later this year.

MARVEL is upgrading its $2.99 **Thor: Son of Asgard** miniseries from a six-parter to ongoing.

The series, written by Akira Yoshida and pencilled by Greg Tocchini, premiered in February.

RENEY Editions is to make available English-language editions of its 50-volume graphic novel series, **Les Tuniques Bleues**.

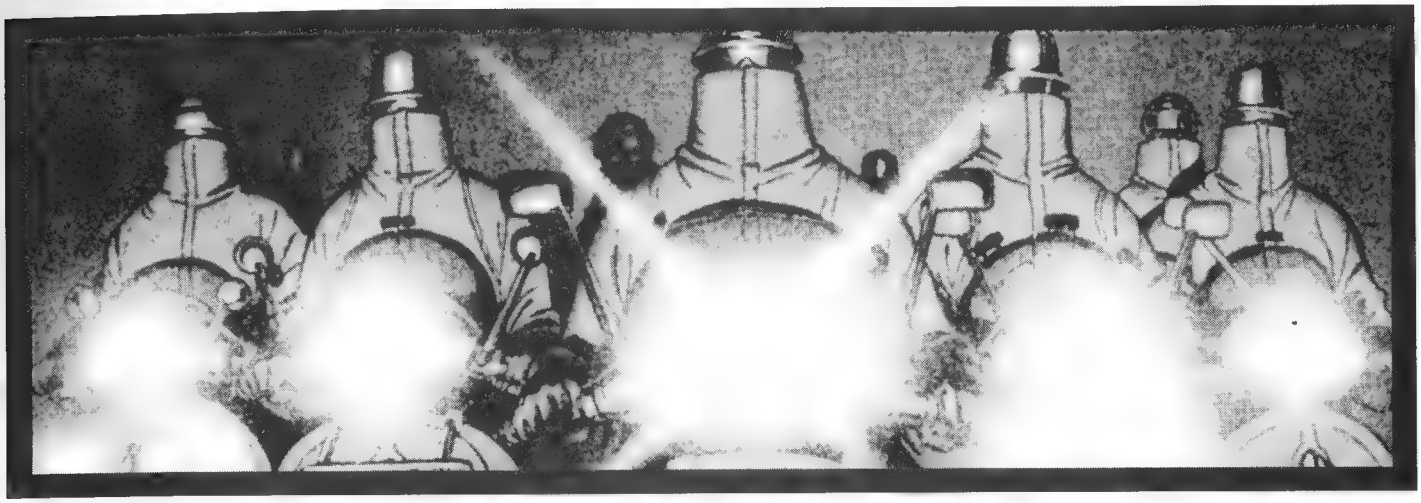
Created by Raoul Cauvin and Louis Salverius for **Spirou Magazine** in 1968, the series – to be titled **The Blue Tunics** for the US – chronicles the adventures of two Yankee soldiers during the American Civil War.

"While the war episodes are fictitious in nature, they are loosely based upon historical events and true American heroism during the Civil War," said Reney's Ethan Dzikowski. "The superb illustrations, the historical value, the easy to read style, the high interest level, and the inherent humour make the series popular with a wide range of readers from all walks of life and of all ages."

WRITER Kate Worley died on Sunday, June 6.

As reported in **CI** #173, although she had been battling cancer for some time, she was working with her ex-husband, artist, Reed Waller to complete their saga of **Omaha the Cat Dancer**. Waller has said he and Jim Vance – Waller's widower – intend to finish the project in her memory, based on her notes and what they both know of her plans for the story.

Writer/artist Dave Gibbons on the origins of The Originals



"WHEN I was in my mid-teens, the most important thing in my life was being a Mod.

Just so we start on the same page, here's what Mod does not mean: Herman's Hermits, Psychedelia 'Lite' and Austin Powers, baby.

And here's what Mod does mean: Italian clothes, black dance music, fights, French haircuts, Lambretta scooters and amphetamine sulphate.

I drove a Lambretta TV 175, with chrome side panels, crash bars, sports silencer, fly-screen, mirrors and lights.

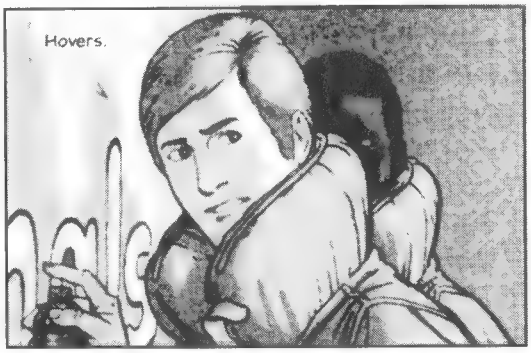
I wore tab-collared shirts, two-tone tonic suits, Levi 501s, desert boots and I had my hair cut short and neat in the West End of London, every four weeks. My mates and I went to the best clubs and listened to the latest imported music.

Speed was the drug of choice and we'd stay up until we dropped.

There were legendary all-weekend parties, mass convoys to coastal towns on public holidays and heroic battles with our arch-enemies. They wore leather jackets, rode motor-cycles and had long greasy hair, so were known to us as "The Grease." We hated everything about them. And they reciprocated.

Even now, if I see someone in a leather jacket riding a motorcycle, I involuntarily subvocalize "Fucking Grease" and have a desire to harm him in some way.

This, I know, is prejudiced, irrational and shameful. As you all know, I am, otherwise, open-minded, tolerant and, I hope, compassionate. That I still have such feelings after so many years seemed worth investigating. As I thought about it, I realised that my experience was, in many ways, archetypal. Outside of the particulars of appearance and behavior, this irrationality was a common experience; "They look and act differently from us, therefore... we hate them."



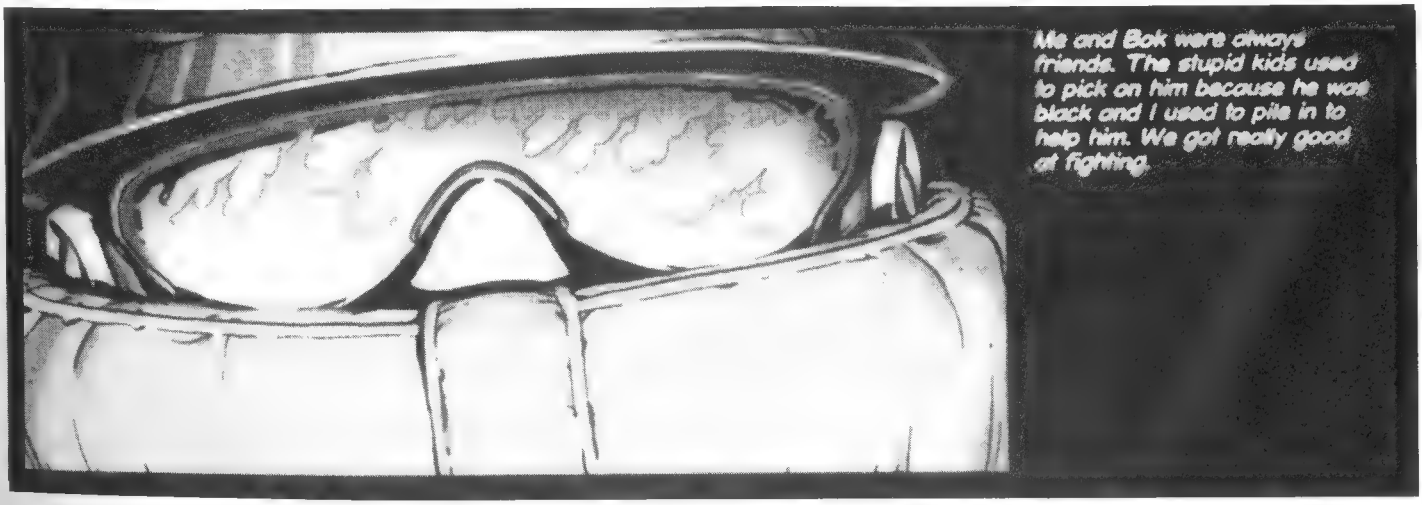
Above: The main protaganists in Dave Gibbons' 160 page Vertigo hardback – the hard-nosed, aspirational Lel and his mate, Bok.

On the more positive side, there was the feeling of belonging to an exclusive group, with its own secret codes, uniforms and rituals. It seemed the kind of mindset that previous generations of young men had experienced in military service. And, like military service, this whole persona-bending experience had only lasted something like a couple of years at most. Given its shark-like, speed-fuelled impetus to consume and move on, it's amazing that Mod lasted even that long.

There had been nothing like Mod before, since no previous generation had the cash that the lifestyle cost, and there has arguably been nothing as passionate and pure since, given the blizzard of cultural diversity that later generations have weathered.

However, all youth cults since have had similar ideologies of exclusivity and antagonism at their heart, so my feelings, though prototypical, are by no means localized. We were just the first. And, of course, the best.

Or, as Dobie Gray's dancefloor anthem, *The In-Crowd*, had it: "Other guys imitate us, but the originals are still the


Me and Bok were always friends. The stupid kids used to pick on him because he was black and I used to pile in to help him. We got really good at fighting.

greatest." As I thought about some of the actual experiences I'd had back then and the people I knew, my grand scheme started to form.

Those were exciting, fast-moving times and anything I expressed in a story about them would have to have that feeling. And, of course, we're talking about a comic strip story here. A comic strip with a lot of action and visual flash. It would also have to look Mod, as I defined it earlier. Not a documentary version of my world then, a sort of *Quadrophenia* lookalike, but something more real. It would have to be how it felt, as exciting to the reader now as it was to me back then.

To make it archetypal, it would be set somewhere undefined, that felt like England then, but wasn't. No big deal about alternative universes or science fiction trappings, but a world that would fit my narrative purpose precisely.

There would be equivalents of all I found so exciting: the music, the clothes, the scooters and everything else. In other words, I'd invent a youth cult from the ground up, as striking as Mod and completely fresh.

The storytelling, too, would have to be innovative. A mixture of comic strip narrative, text passages and graphics. Not in the way of, well, **Watchmen**, but a more organic, free-flowing amalgam that would enable me to embed song lyrics, fashion pages, news stories, etc. in the heart of the narrative.

The package itself would be distinctive: a single volume, dense and concentrated, monochrome, certainly very design-conscious, that could stand its ground outside the comicbook store. It would, itself, have to be typically Mod. At the centre of all these visions, of course, is the story itself. More than just a vehicle for the thoughts above, I wanted it to be satisfying in terms of pure drama.

So I put down some things that had really happened, twisted and exaggerated them to taste, mixed in other elements and came up with **The Originals**.

Working as a comics artist since the early 1970s, Dave Gibbons has drawn such **2000AD** *classics as ABC Warriors, Harlem Heroes and Rogue Trooper (which he co-created), as well as taking the original artist on* **Doctor Who Weekly**. *For America he has worked on* **Superman**, **Batman** *and* **Green Lantern** *for DC, and is best known for his collaboration with Alan Moore on the seminal* **Watchmen** *series.* **The Originals** *hardcover is released through Vertigo on October 6th priced $24.95*

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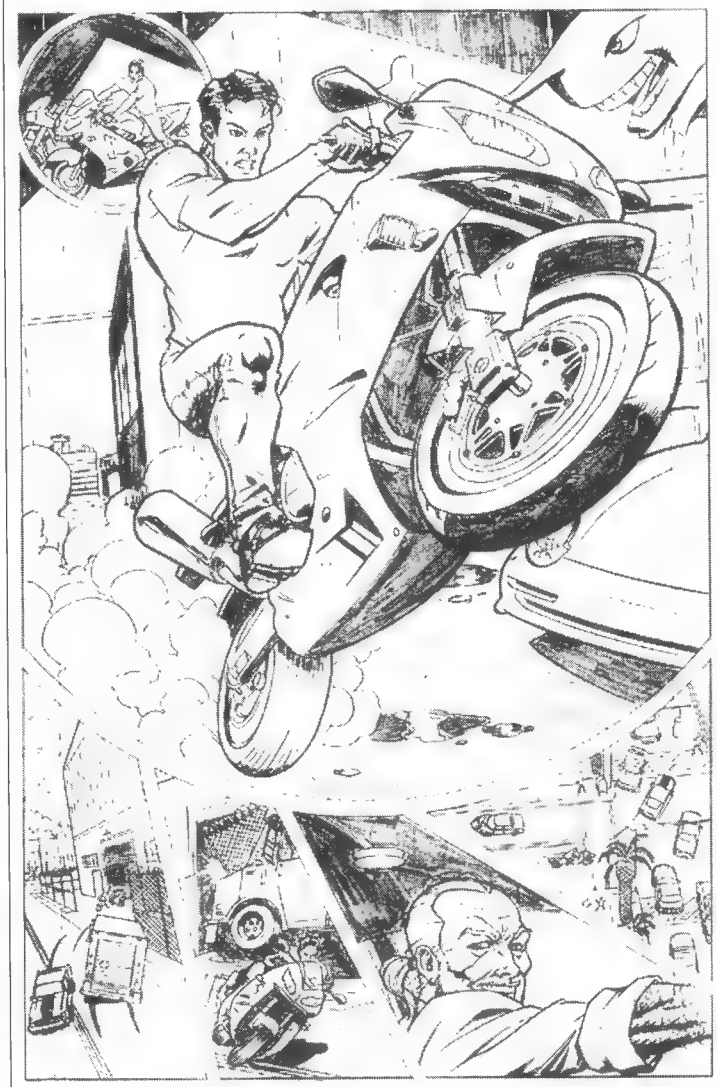
Mike Conroy's Frame to Frame

Charting the latest news between films and comics



HE MIGHT be adopting an 'if you can't beat'em, join'em mentality, but Scott Alan Kinney has taken it upon himself to rework his **Killer Stunts, Inc.** for the comics' big screen outing. As he put it, "To be honest, I felt like I was at liberty to change my mind and 're-imagine' my own creation. It probably wouldn't have felt the same if somebody else would have taken it and done that."

As to exactly what 'that' is, "Film stories notoriously differ – often radically – from the source material," proclaimed Kinney. "I'm sure many a novelist and comic creator/writer have cringed when they read the film script or watched the finished flick. In my case, I was the instigator of many of the changes. Leo [Partible], my writing partner on the first few treatments, also contributed characters and plot points, with additional feedback from the producers – you know, the guys with experience making big-budget films like *Die Hard* and *Spy-Hunter*.

"Where the final film story ends up is not so much in my hands at this point," the writer admitted. "I have input, sure, but since a seasoned screenwriter is further developing the story, my input as a writer has morphed to the input of a co-producer. Ultimately, a studio will decide if the script is something they're ready to have the director and producers shoot. That's how the game works."

Kinney confessed it started to go wrong from the off. "I wrote an, I kid you not, 80-page 'scriptment' based on my original miniseries story arc. It had lots of vampires, werewolves and other creatures of the night and their underworld intersecting with Billy – the stuntman and main character in **Killer Stunts, Inc.** and his Hollywood world."

Wild and woolly

"You know what? It was *crazy*," he stated. "My original series scripts had everything and the kitchen sink thrown in for good measure – knights in armour, a Great White shark, but you know what? Why was my main character a stuntman? My original story moved away from the concept of Billy being a tough-as-nails stuntman into an entirely different story.

"I stepped back from the whole thing and realised there was no reason for my protagonist to be a stuntman," claimed Kinney. "The uniqueness of his profession was ultimately lost in the wild and woolly tale I had written. This was all discussed with the producers, and we agreed it was best to go back to the beginning with my stuntman character. Who was this guy? What is his world? What series of events propels the story in an interesting and entertaining direction? How can the main character bring his unique skills and abilities to bear on the circumstances he finds himself in?"

Sword of Dracùla

While the movie is being moved along by *The Rocketeer* and *Die Hard Trilogy* producer Chuck Gordon's Daybreak Productions and Adrian Askarieh's Prime Universe – which have also acquired the rights to Jason Henderson's **Sword of Dracula** – Kinney is reworking the original comic in the light of his experiences with the screenplay.

While a first issue – drawn by **Bite Club**'s David Hahn – was released by Pulp Mag Press last September, **Killer Stunts, Inc.** is to be relaunched either late this year or early next by DBG Visions, a new enterprise formed by the Dabel Brothers, Partible – who is an independent producer – and *Underworld* creator/producer Kevin Grevioux. It is now being illustrated by Scott Cohn, a relative newcomer.

It would seem that Kinney's done

well for himself but it's probably not the first time Hollywood has grabbed a supposed hot property that never actually materialises.

Just goes to show... what matters is the concept.

Batman vs Scarecrow

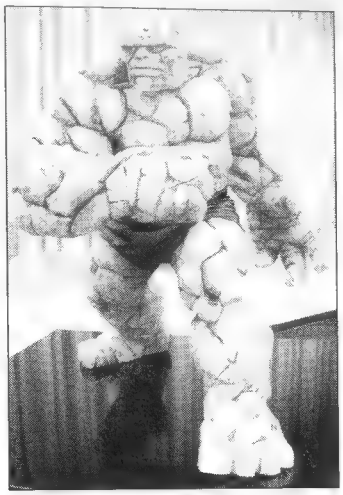
Batman Begins director Christopher Nolan has been talking about the movie, which kick starts the Bat-franchise after Joel Schumacher lost the plot with *Batman and Robin*.

"Batman is an absolutely iconic character, one of the great figures in pop culture, really. But there has to be a reason for making this film as opposed to just renting Tim Burton's version," said Nolan, who added, "How did this guy who has no superpowers acquire all of these capabilities? He lives in the real world – it's sort of New York on steroids, but it's *our* world."

It's interesting that Warner Bros has chosen to cast a Welshmen, Christian Bale, in the title role, especially as it also hired a 33 year old Englishman to helm it. But the *Memento* director has a good idea where he's going with the story, which begins with a 25 year old Bruce Wayne returning to Gotham in time to take on the Scarecrow – played by Cillian Murphy, an Irishman – who's out to poison the entire city.

The film might sound like an old joke about an Englishman, a Welshman and an Irishman, but even the Batsuit makes sense – it's a futuristic military design complete with body armour and muscle-recovery devices. It starts out translucent before Wayne sprays it black to camouflage it.

With two more Englishman – Michael Caine as Alfred and Gary Oldman as Lt. James Gordon – and an Ulsterman – Liam Neeson, who plays Wayne's mentor, Henri Ducard – it's looking like we Brits may be able to teach the Yanks a thing or two about how to film their superheroes. Roll on next June.



The above Thing maquette threw the crowd into paroxysms of delight when it went on display at the Makeup Artist Trade Show held in Pasadena on June 12-13. Disappointment soon followed as, rather than being an artifact from the in-development Fantastic Four *film, it turned out to be a sample created by EdgeFX. Spectral Motion, the company that produced Abe Sapien for* Hellboy, *is actually creating the effects on the Marvel movie.*

And finally...

While it has normally turned a blind eye to such fan films as *Batman: Dead End*, Warner Bros has asked the organisers of the San Diego Comicon not to show them in future.

What this means for such projects as *Fool's Gold*, the Golden Age Sandman feature being developed by UK-based Abstract Harmony, is anybody's guess, but we know it can't be good for the indie film scene.

FEB-23-1999
NEXUS
THE MAN HIMSELF
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Shown above is Steve Rude's Nexus *style guide. The* ***X-Men: Children of the Atom*** *artist is still striving to develop an animated TV series based on the character he and writer Mike Baron created for Capital Comics in 1981. Rude, who has been funding the project himself for the past 16 years, has produced a two-minute promo DVD, which goes on sale at the San Diego Comicon, priced $14.99 . "There's commentary by me and Baron," stated Rude. "In the* Nexus *animation there's no actual voices. It's just music, sound effects and animation. We're also including a copy of the* Nexus *series bible – shrunk down to fit in the DVD case – with characters that are going to show up, villains and so on." For further details log on to www.steverude.com*

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Paul Gravett, author of *Manga: Sixty Years of Japanese Comics,* is better known to CI readers as columnist on...

a) Frame to Frame
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Please also complete the following:

My five favourite features this issue are (please mark in order as *1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th* – no ticks):

___ NEWS INTERNATIONAL
___ SEZ DEZ
___ THE ORIGINALS PREVIEW
___ LETTERS
___ TALKING SHOP
___ NOVEL GRAPHICS
___ FRAME TO FRAME
___ REVIEWS
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Too many rewrites can make a wrong

Talking Shop with Stephen Holland

Reminding people there's a real mainstream out there

SO, ER, YEAH, it seems that Page 45 won the first ever Diamond Comics Award for Best Retailer in the UK. Cheers for that!

Seems like a fix, doesn't it? I mean, Dez being on the panel, presenting the award, then accepting it on our behalf... No wonder there was no mention of it last issue!

I'd planned to be in Bristol: it's a beautiful city with the coolest modern fountains and I did enjoy the fun a couple of years ago – although something needs to be done about the ventilation. Unfortunately business conspired against me, then we only heard we were on the shortlist a week in advance, at which point I reckoned a dash down south would jinx it for us.

We're all inexpressibly grateful to everyone who took the time and trouble to vote... well, vote for us, anyway. I still don't know who else was on the final panel of judges. Someone mentioned Rich Johnston as a possibility, but it seems that was only a rumour. Rich's spent so long spreading them, he's now become one.

For the record, I don't have much contact with Dez. He no longer responds to my emails, not even when I send in a column. (Do you think that's trust or exasperation? Answers on a competition entry form to...) The last time I heard from him was when I told him how constricting I found being limited to 1,000 words. "Do you realise I start with 3,000 and have to edit it down four times before my waffling finally fits into the space?" There was a silence.

"Stephen, you're an idiot. I work on screen, with the exact space I have in front of me. I begin typing, and continue until I reach the last ten lines, at which point I sum up, wrap it up, and it's done." Now there's both a professional and a natural.

Paul Gravett swears he only writes his on the evening of the deadline (I am in awe: pick a subject, write fluently and with total authority – then present it for publication within the space of hours). I just don't have that in me. It's too... daunting.

In fact a shark-diving holiday in South Africa was recently advertised with a full-colour photograph of the enormous jaws of a Great White Shark, opening hungrily against a flimsy underwater cage. "By the way," it announced, "divers require an open water certificate to dive in the cage, as well as a direct line to the man upstairs." At the very least, I'd say. Also mandatory: a total lack of instinct for survival.

And that's what it feels like writing for **Comics International**. I could keep my mouth shut and make sure I never say anything contentious, or I could be the ultimate politician and just lie through my teeth, but as a French waiter once told me, "Si quelque chose est vrai, il faut le dire."

> A French waiter once told me... "If something is true, you should say it" - which has landed me in trouble ever since.

Initially I thought he was just recommending the mussels, but as it transpires he'd said, "If something is true, you should say it" – which has landed me in trouble ever since.

In fact I'm wincing now in anticipation of the letters column this month, not because of what I wrote last issue, but because of what I didn't write. For the first time I can recall I was embellished, when someone chose to include the word "discotheque" in my piece. I have never used the word "discotheque" in my life! Who has, in the last 30 years? "Nightclub" is the word they were looking for.

I'll tell you what, though, if a few conflated paragraphs and an outmoded piece of explication is the most a columnist has to endure, you're doing pretty well compared to smaller-name writers at Marvel. They don't crow about it (so I guess that's up to me), but the editorial constraints at **CI** are minimal, which means you're reading what's intended to be read. I was told early on that it's firmly hands-off when it comes to readers in particular, whom Dez believes deserves the last word – hence the *Comment* section with no rebuttals, and very few in the letters column.

But then there are those prize competitions, where you all get to vote on what you liked and what you hated, and it begins to feel like *Comics Idol* (only without the good looks or the youth factor – just thought I'd get in there before you did). I have a feeling this one will be rated "distinctly average" by some sour-faced Simon Cowell. Well, you should hear me *sing*, then you'd complain.

Coming back to deadlines, you won't see much wavering with **CI** in that regard either. A week's flexibility perhaps, but never the catastrophes of Todd McFarlane's **Spawn** or, to be fair, Adrian Tomine's **Optic Nerve**. Brian Michael Bendis said something recently that'll strike a chord with those tired of waiting – that every comics writer should do a stint in McDonalds. In the land of the fast-food giants, there's no room for manoeuvre: you hit your targets, or you're out. Once you've fried in that environment, like Brian himself, hitting comicbook deadlines doesn't appear to be a problem.

You're beginning to wonder what my point is this issue. Haven't a clue – I was thrown against a deadline. But at least I got through a column without throwing too many stones, so that glass house I inhabit should be safe for a while.

Oh, the Award... Mark and I would like to thank the customers, creators, distributors and publishers – in that order. Never forget the hierarchy! All hail the customer and creator!

Stephen Holland runs Nottingham's Page 45 with Mark Simpson and Tom Rosin.

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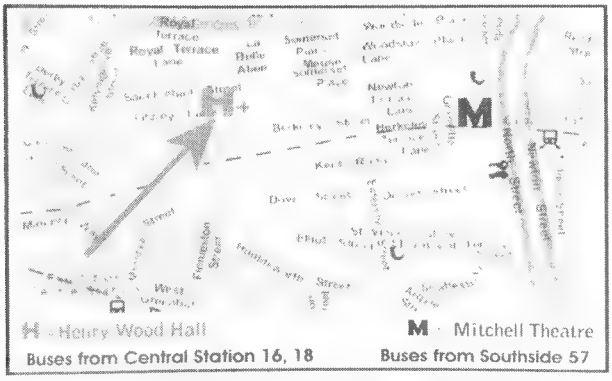

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Q&A

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Baffle us with comics questions, or save us with answers!

Wetherell & Lawrence

David Robinson via e-mail:
dr_work_99@hotmail.com

TWO subjects for your think tank: Given that the late Art Wetherell must have plied much of his trade at a time when it was difficult for Brits to break into US comics, may we have a larger run-down of his work than that which accompanied his obituary (**CI** #172)?

Also in **CI** #172, Richard Thomas recalls showing Don Lawrence how to "colour in" using Adobe Photoshop. Is this actually achievable to Lawrence's standard? When my former employer's studio tried this type of thing, the resulting colour always appeared over-bold or insipid (indeed, they always preferred to scan my hand-coloured artwork!)

Were they using the wrong hardware (IT and print)?

While the first question will take some time to research, Art having worked in semi-obscurity much of his life, the second is answered elsewhere this very issue. John Ridgway (Letters, p57) comments on how impractical he also found Photoshop for colouring.

Fanzine rights

Clive Sutherland via e-mail:
CRSutherland@btinternet.com

I AM thinking of producing a series of fanzines based on Marvel comics and characters and wonder if you could tell me the position regarding copyright?

I remember back in the early '90s reading Phil Hall's **Mutant Media**, where he produced black and white illustrations from X-titles. Is this acceptable to do nowadays if I used a copyright line, or would I have to get permission from Marvel? If so, could you tell me how to go about it and possibly how difficult/costly it might be?

If producing illustrations isn't acceptable, would there be any stipulations to producing a fanzine without them, where the text material would be in the form of checklists, guides, biographies etc if I didn't actually copy directly from Marvel books, but used my own words.

I'd be grateful if you could answer these questions for me as I am anxious to get to grips with these guides if there was a possibility of being able to do so.

*As a man who boasted he never lasted anywhere beyond a year (except for his **CI** work), Phil Hall's three-issue run isn't necessarily a safe precedent... even though I suggested the title and helped and encouraged him with it.*

*Basically, a title as vague and non-TM as his **Mutant Media** is your safest route. By it not infringing on any existing title, you cannot be accused of "passing off" as a Marvel title, or of "damaging" an existing work with your own. As far as content goes, provided you are using material in the context of reviews or a historical study then you are within your rights.*

But this does not mean you can lift huge slabs of copyrighted material. Now that would be an infringement. Visuals to illustrate a point being made in your text, with the copyright acknowledgement accompanying, would hardly be likely to incur the wrath of any publisher.

Of course, adding "non-profit" into your indicia never hurts either!

Perfect Collections

Mark Badham-Moore via e-mail

CAN anyone explain how the **Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind Perfect Collections** fit in with the 'Books' as they were known (published as single issues)?

The issues don't seem to run into the Perfect Collections seamlessly, or am I just missing something? Since I lost my Perfect Collections #1 and 2 in a house move, I just want to know the best way to replace them.

On a different subject, I acquired the missing (last) issue of **Knights of Pendragon** recently and have been re-reading the series for the last few days. I've noticed, apart from the fact that it was a damn good book, that inside the front cover it says that each issue was produced using Scangloss paper.

My question is: was this paper as good as stated environmentally speaking and is it still used by any published comics or magazines?

*On **Nausicaa**, there were seven volumes (comics) and four Perfect Collection omnibuses. Because the division doesn't work as whole numbers, you'll find one and a bit volumes in each omnibus. As in the fourth one containing all of Volume 7 and the last third of Volume 6.*

On scangloss (we really do get the weirdest of questions), it's a relatively inexpensive paper still offered by the trade. That it is still available must mean something, but we can't say what!

A big thanks, CI!

Simon Jensko via e-mail:
simon.jensko@ntlworld.com

I'M OFF to New Zealand as an animator on July 31st. New life, new job, etc.

I owe it all (or nearly all) to **CI**! Some time very late in 2002 or

early 2003 there appeared a two-page feature on an artist using computer-generated art.

I think it was partly an answer to an argument previously posted. If I remember correctly (and I probably don't!) the feature mentioned V-Ray and Vue D'Esprit.

There was a large reproduction artwork of a city – a pyramid – and the artist was saying how he used the software to create some backgrounds as a time saving effort. Or something. Sorry, my memory is so vague!

I am desperate to get that feature – because of that I looked into the software he mentioned and somehow from that got into using 3DS Max – learned the software, made a demo reel and the rest is... history.

If someone could please tell me the issue number that article appeared in I would be really grateful. It means I can buy it to keep for posterity. Kind of sad, I know, but seriously, that article completely (and I mean that) changed my life and as I'm leaving Blighty I really want to re-read it and take it with me. I'm gutted I lost it – if anyone recalls that article please let me know so I can get it.

Oh, irony of ironies! The artist you mention is back, in this very issue, and again mentioning the same subject. H'mm, that's twice John Ridgway's had a namecheck this Q&A. He'll be wanting royalties next!

Give us your New Zealand address when you settle, Simon, and we'll mail a couple of copies of the issue in question over to you.

We have so much catching up to do, with a big stack of unanswered Qs. Sorry to correspondents to keep you all waiting, we'll try to plan a few more Q&A pages next month. ...Dez

Answer Updates

Readers provide answers for previous issues' questions

Avengers/Defenders War

Leigh Hunt via e-mail

THE answer to Rob Sweeny's question in **CI** #172 is the **Avengers/Defenders War**, which came out as a trade in 2002 and which contains **Avengers** #116-118 and **Defenders** 9-11 plus the brief prologues in **Avengers** #115 and **Defenders** #8.

I don't think the Cosmic Cube saga has ever been collected.

Stephen L. Holland, Page 45, Nottingham

THE *Avengers/Defenders War* ran through **Defenders** #8-11 and **Avengers** #115-118. There was a book by the same title published by Marvel just the other year, but like so many of their trades, it's already out of print. You'll probably still find a few copies lingering in various comic shops. We have one.

1970s Marvel annuals

Tony Ingram, Ipswich, Suffolk

STEVE Page asked about the 1970s Marvel hardback annuals from World Distributors (**CI** #170). I don't pretend to know if this is a complete list, but I've so far found, or found reference to:

Avengers Annual 1975-1978
Captain America Collectors Edition 1981 (Grandreams, an annual in all but name)
Captain Britain Annual 1978
Fantastic Four Annual 1979-1981
Hulk Annual 1977 to 1984 (1979 and 1980 featured new strips based on the TV show)
Marvel Annual 1973-1974 (Fleetway)
Marvel/Mighty World of Marvel Annual 1975, 1977 and 1979 (World)
Marvel Comic Annual 1969-1971
Marvel Storybook Annual 1968 (World)
Marvel Superheroes Annual 1980 (Grandream)
Marvel Superheroes Secret Wars Annual 1986
Spider-Man Annual 1975 to 1986
Superheroes Annual 1978
Titans Annual 1977 to 1978 and X-Men Collectors Edition (Grandreams) 1981 to 1982

There were also **Star Wars** annuals (under the title of whichever film was most recent) from 1978 to 1984, featuring Marvel adaptations or all-new strips; **Transformers Annual** in 1985 featuring Marvel strips; **Blade Runner** and **For Your Eyes Only** adaptations in the form of annuals and at least two **Indiana Jones** annuals, all in the early '80s, although the precise years escape me. Oh, and a Spider-Woman annual in about 1985 (I think). So Steve's got a way to go, yet!

Brit revival

Nigel Barker, 47 Acheson Drive, Prestonpans, East Lothian EH32 9BU

REGARDING Peter Sidebotham's question in **CI** #169 about a revival of old British comics characters such as Robot Archie and the Spider, perhaps he is thinking of Paul Grist's excellent Jack Staff comics?

Jack Staff was cover-featured in **CI** about a year ago [**CI** #154, January 2003] as a preview for Grist's new Image-published series. As I think was pointed out in that article, several of the supporting cast are thinly disguised copies of old British comics characters – including Robot Archie and the Spider!

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Compiled by Jim Hannah

The following are 32 page colour titles unless stated

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Milkman Murders 3 (of 4; Joe Casey & Steve Parkhouse) When mum dips into dad's meths stash, and he goes ape and puts her head through the bathroom mirror, you know things are off to a rough start. Mature. $2.99

Oh My Goddess! 112 *(Sora Unchained* 8 of 8; Kosuke Fujishima) The furious go-kart race between Sora Hasegawa and Keiichi Morisato comes to its conclusion. 48pg b&w $3.99

Star Wars: Empire 25 *(Idiot's Array* 2 of 2; Ron Marz & Jeff Johnson) The Beast and the Beauty joins forces when Chewie teams up with smuggler Sheela Odala to free Han Solo from the clutches of a crime lord. $2.99

DC Comics

Batman/Catwoman: Trail of the Gun 2 (Ann Nocenti & Ethan Van Sciver) Strange alliances are made as Catwoman teams with her rivals – and Batman – to find the gun that never misses. 48pg $5.95

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Looney Tunes 118 (various) A full issue of Duck Dodgers in the 24 1/2th Century! $2.25

Majestic 2 (Dan Abnett and Andy Lanning & Karl Kerschl) Majestic adopts a secret identity in an attempt to understand humankind better. But could his powers just put his newfound friends and family in harm's way? $2.95

The Monolith 8 *(Friendly Fire* 3 of 3; Jimmy Palmiotti + Justin Gray & Tomm Coker) The tragic truth behind the Incinerator's attacks is revealed as the Monolith and Batman race to stop his next bombing. $2.95

Scratch 4 (Sam Kieth) The mob blames Scratch for its children's disappearances – though he and his new girlfriend Sage are closer than ever to uncovering the truth. $2.50

oneshot **Smax** (Alan Moore & Zander Cannon + Andrew Currie; *America's Best Comics;* hbk) Collecting the five-issue miniseries written by Alan Moore that featured the return of Top 10's Smax the Dragon Killer. What happens when Jeff Smax and Toybox return to Smax's homeworld? 136pg .. $19.95

Superman: Man of Steel Vol 3 (various; tpbk) The third collection of Superman stories from the 1980s reprints Superman #4-6, Action Comics #587-589 and Adventures of Superman #427-429, and features a new cover and introduction by artist Jerry Ordway. 208pg $19.95

Swamp Thing 7 *(Missing Links* 1 of 2; Will Pfeifer & Richard Corben; *Vertigo)* When an unsuspecting cryptozoologist arrives in the Louisiana bayou, Swamp Thing drags the scientist deep into his pit of mental torment. $2.95

Thundercats: Enemy's Pride #4 (John Layman & Joe Vriens + Roberto Campos; *WildStorm)* The mystery villain behind Lion-O's strange and dangerous behaviour has been revealed and, with it, the fate of Thundera!$2.95

Y: The Last Man 26 (Brian K. Vaughan & Pia Guerra + Jose Marzan Jr; *Vertigo)* Yorick's older sister, Hero, takes centre stage. Her troubled childhood is revealed, including where she was the day the Plague hit and how she became a member of the bloodthirsty Amazons. $2.95

Marvel

Alpha Flight 7 *(Waxing Poetic* 1 of 2; Scott Lobdell & Dave Ross) Is the All-New, All-Different Alpha Flight really disbanding after only seven issues? $2.99

new **Bullseye: Greatest Hits** 1 (Daniel Way & Steve Dillon; *Marvel Knights)* The untold origin of Daredevil's ultimate nemesis is revealed at last. And who thought being bad could be so much fun? $2.99

Captain America & The Falcon 7 *(Avengers Disassembled* 3 of 4; Priest & Joe Bennett) Cap struggles to come to terms with his newfound feelings for the Scarlet Witch even as horrors from his past nearly consume him, and continues to defy Washington's demand that he surrender the so-called Anti-Cap. $2.99

oneshot **Daredevil vs Bullseye** Vol 1 (various; tpbk) See how the first target was drawn in this collection of the earliest battles between Marvel's deadliest assassin and the Man Without Fear! Collects Daredevil #131-132, #146, #169, #181 and #191. 144pg $15.99

new **Elektra: The Hand** #1 (Akira Yoshida & Christian Gossett; *Marvel Knights)* Elektra witnesses a mystic ceremony that leads her to the never-before-revealed origin of The Hand, the world's most deadly assassins. $2.99

oneshot **Essential Super-Villain Team-Up** (various; tpbk) War epic stretching from the towers of Doctor Doom's Latveria to the depths of Namor's Atlantis – with the Fantastic Four, the Avengers and the Champions caught in the middle! Collects Giant-Size Super-Villain Team-Up #1-2, Super-Villain Team-Up #1-14 and #16-17, Avengers #154-156, Champions #16, and Astonishing Tales #1-8. 552pg $16.99

Exiles 52 *(Living Planet* 1 of 2; Tony Bedard & James Calafiore) The Exiles must stop the Avengers and Doctor Doom before they destroy the Earth. $2.99

new **Gambit** 1 (John Layman & Georges Jeanty) Ever wonder what Gambit gets up to when he's not out saving the world with the X-Men? $2.99

new **Hulk & Thing: Hard Knocks** 1 (of 4; Bruce Jones & Jae Lee; *Marvel Knights)* Think you know everything about the unique relationship between Marvel's two most powerful sluggers? Well, Marvel has made up some new stuff! .. $3.50

new **Jubilee** 1 (Robert Kirkman & Derec Donovan) Living in the X-Mansion was a trip, but now Jube's found where weirdos really come out – Los Angeles. $2.99

Marvel Age Fantastic Four 6 (Marc Sumerak & Eric Vedder) After his defeat at the hands of the Fantastic Four, Doctor Doom is out for revenge, and this time he's not alone! $2.25

Marvel Age Spider-Man 11 (Todd Dezago & Valentine De Landro) Desperate to clear his name and rid himself of the accursed Spider-Man, Doctor Octopus draws the wall-crawler out. $2.25

Spider-Girl 78 (Tom DeFalco & Pat Olliffe) Torn between her loyalties to Kaine and the Black Tarantula, Spider-Girl finally confronts Lady Octopus in a final battle. $2.99

Spider-Man Unlimited 5 (Kim "Howard" Johnson and Martin Sweeny & Staz Jonhson) Relates the story of a hostage crisis at the Daily Bugle, and the tale of a security guard whose life is changed when a robbery goes awry. $2.99

Starjammers 4 (of 5; Kevin J. Anderson & Jorge Lucas) Young Tolo Hawk sees his opportunity for revenge when trouble befalls his captors. $2.99

Thor 84 *(Ragnarok* 4 of 6; Michael Oeming & Andrea Di Vito) What makes a god? Is it birthright, is it happenstance, or is it in the making? Thor finds out the hard way as he seeks answers on how to face the coming end of his people. $2.99

Ultimate Spider-Man 65 (Brian Michael Bendis & Mark Bagley) It's the Breakfast Club redux as Peter, Mary Jane, Liz, Flash and Kong are busted and given detention. $2.25

new **Ultimates** Vol 1 (Mark Millar & Bryan Hitch; tpbk) A teenager is climbing walls in Manhattan. Mutants are attacking the White House. Nick Fury, head of the elite espionage agency known as S.H.I.E.L.D., knows the only way to combat these strange new threats is with a team of his own superhumans. Collects The Ultimates Vol 1: Super-Human and The Ultimates Vol 2: Homeland Security. 368pg ... $29.99.

Uncanny X-Men 448 *(Guess Who's Back in Town?* 1 of 2; Chris Claremont & Olivier Coipel) After their battle with the Fury, the X-Men look forward to a pleasant visit in England with their old friends Brian and Meggan Braddock – but naturally, fate has other plans. $2.25

new **Warlock** #1 (Greg Pak & Charles Adlard) In a world on the brink, humankind's time is running out, but deep in the jungles of South America a solution is being forged, a solution that will bring about a grand new utopia – and that solution is Adam Warlock. $2.99

close-up

The White Lama Vol 1: Reincarnation

DC Comics

Writer: Alexandro Jodorowski

Artist: Georges Bess

Metaborons writer Jodorowski tells a tale of martial arts, mystical adventure and spiritual awakenings. When the Grand Lama dies, corruption spreads across the land. Gabriel, the child of white explorers and reincarnation of the Grand Lama, must learn the sacred ways to fend off a great evil. 144pg $17.95

ON SALE SEPTEMBER 8

ON SALE FROM
SEPT 8

Dark Horse

Blade of the Immortal 93 *(Last Blood* 4 of 5; Hiroaki Samura) Stunned by conflicting emotions and indecision, Rin watches as the revenge-mad Iriya confronts Makie, the skilled angel of death. b&w $2.99

new **Go Girl! Vol 1: The Time Team** (Trina Robbins & Anne Timmons; tpbk) Doc, the school genius, has rigged up a tight little time machine masquerading as an exercise bike, all fine and good until pretty-girl princess Heather cops a ride and drags herself, Doc, and Lindsay Goldman back several million years. 96pg b&w $5.95

Star Wars Tales 21 (various) Bringing you the story of Darca Nyl, a Jedi wandering the galaxy's outer rim hunting for revenge and hiding a deadly secret. 64pg $5.99

DC Comics

100 Bullets #53 *(Wylie Runs the Voodoo Down* 3 of 3; Brian Azzarello & Eduardo Risso; *Vertigo)* Things heat up when Wylie Times finds himself in the thick of a family reunion more intense than a barrel of Cajun gumbo! .. $2.50

Action Comics 819 (Chuck Austen & Ivan Reis and Marc Campos) Introducing Sodom & Gomorrah, a new husband-and-wife supervillain team prepared to give Superman a sound beating. $2.50

Aquaman 22 *(With the Fishes* 2 of 3; Will Pfeifer & Patrick Gleason + Christian Alamy) The Eel tightens his grip on Sub Diego and, since he can manipulate the actual motion of water, that grip quickly becomes a stranglehold. $2.50

Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight 183 *(War Games* Act 2, Part 2; A.J. Lieberman & Brad Walker and Troy Nixey) Faced with overwhelming numbers of criminals at war, Batman realises it's time to join the enemy. $2.50

oneshot **Batman: War Drums** (Bill Willingham + Andersen Gabrych & various; tpbk) The prelude to 2004's *War Games*. Features stories from Detective Comics #790-796 and Robin #126-128. 256pg $17.95

Bite Club 6 (Howard Chaykin + David Tischman & David Hahn; *Vertigo)* Leto's leadership of the vampire mafia is challenged, Risa reveals her feminine side, and the shadowy figure who's been manipulating events since Eduardo's murder steps into the light. $2.95

Bloodhound 3 (Dan Jolley & Leonard Kirk and Robin Riggs) The hunt for the superpowered serial killer continues as Clevenger reveals the unique gift that's made him invaluable to the FBI. $2.95

Challengers of the Unknown 4 (Howard Chaykin) The curtain is pulled back just enough to get a glimpse of who our heroes are, who they were, and how they came to be. $2.95

Fables 29 *(War Stories* 2 of 2; Bill Willingham & Tony Akins + Jimmy Palmiotti; *Vertigo)* A band of American infiltrators is behind enemy lines and in for the fight of their lives deep in World War II Germany as a mythical monster is pitted against Bigby Wolf. $2.50

Fallen Angel 15 (Peter David & David Lopez + Fernando Blanco) The head of the Hierarchy has given Juris an ultimatum: He can dispose of the Fallen Angel or lose his position running Bete Noire and possibly his life! $2.95

oneshot **Gen[13]: Ordinary Heroes** (Adam Hughes + Mark Farmer & various; *WildStorm)* Features the *Ordinary Heroes* story by Adam Hughes and Mark Farmer, *Gen[13] Bootleg* #1 and 2 by Farmer & Alan Davis; and the *Wham* short story by Hughes and Kevin Nowlan from The WildStorm Thunderbook. 128pg $14.95

Gotham Central 23 (Greg Rucka & Michael Lark and Stefano Gaudiano) The detectives of the G.C.P.D. grapple with a war that's too widespread for them to handle alone. $2.50

Green Arrow 42 (Judd Winick & Phil Hester + Ande Parks) Brick – Star City's newest heavy-hitter – shakes the city to its very foundations with a terrifying assault. Can Ollie and his new sidekick save the day? $2.50

JLA 105 *(The Pain of the Gods* 5 of 6; Chuck Austen & Ron Garney) Wonder Woman faces a manic battle with a new villainess, only to be left with concerns about her own mortality. $2.25

JSA 65 *(Out of Time* 1 of 2; Geoff Johns & Don Kramer + Keith Champagne) Rex Tyler, the original Hourman, must journey into the timestream itself in search of his only son. $2.50

Nightwing 97 *(War Games* Act 2, Part 3; Devin Grayson & Mike Lilly and Andy Owens) Scarface and Penguin each make a power play, but who'll come out on top? $2.25

Scooby-Doo 88 (John Rozum & Joe Staton + Scott McRae) Velma's cousin is suspected of a crazy crime, and it's up to the gang to help her out! .. $2.25

Teen Titans 15 *(Beast Boys and Girls* 3 of 3; Geoff Johns & Tom Grummett and Lary Stucker) In order to help those around him, Beast Boy must decide between his past and his future. $2.50

final issue **Touch** 6 (John Francis Moore & Wes Craig + Prentis Rollins) Cooper is in a load of trouble. The man he's chosen to endow with super powers has gone missing, and a dirty cop is dangerously close to discovering his secret! $2.50

oneshot **The White Lama Vol 1: Reincarnation** (Alexandro Jodorowski & Georges Bess; tpbk) *See Close-Up on facing page.*

oneshot **Wonder Woman: Challenge of the Gods** (George Perez + Len Wein & Perez + Bruce Patterson; tpbk) This second volume collects Wonder Woman #7-14, featuring the debut of the deadly Cheetah! 176pg $19.95

Marvel

Captain America 31 *(Avengers Disassembled* 3 of 4; Robert Kirkman & Scot Eaton) Cap and Diamondback find themselves at the mercy of some treacherous snakes – will they be able to escape? $2.99

District X #5 *(Mr M* 5 of 6; David Hine & David Yardin; *Marvel Knights)* Tragedy strikes Bishop and Ismael as the hunt for Mr M continues. $2.99

Emma Frost 15 *(Bloom* 3 of 6; Karl Bollers & Carlo Pagulayan) Emma's high school teacher – who was fired for kissing her – is back in her life! $2.99

Identity Disc 4 (Robert Rodi & John Higgins) Blackmailed into the service of a mysterious woman, the team of deadly villains embarks on a suicide mission to retrieve the priceless Identity Disc. $2.99

Iron Man 88 (Mark Ricketts & Tony Harris) Still reeling from recent traumas, Iron Man must face off against his evil doppelganger. $2.99

new **Marvel Age Hulk** 1 (Mike Raicht & Alex Sanchez) When Bruce loses control, he becomes a very different man – the unstoppable creature men call the Hulk! $1.75

Marvel Knights 4 #10 *(The Stuff of Dreams* 1 of 3; Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa & Jim Muniz; *Marvel Knights)* Something strange is happening to New York's First Family of Super Heroes. Their deepest fears and doubts are spreading from their dreams to the waking world. ..... $2.99.

Marvel Knights Spider-Man #6 *(Venomous* 2 of 4; Mark Millar & Terry Dodson. Cover & Pencils by Terry Dodson; *Marvel Knights)* As Spider-Man continues to search for Aunt May, he pays a visit to a certain academy in Westchester and enlists the help of the world's most famous team of mutants. $2.99

Powers 4 (Brian Michael Bendis & Michael Avon Oeming; *Icon Comics)* The city is being torn apart by a Powers turf war – and the superheroes are nowhere to be found! $2.99

The Pulse 5 *(Thin Air* 5 of 5; Brian Michael Bendis & Mark Bagley; *Marvel Knights)* The downfall of Norman Osborn – the shocking conclusion to the story that rocked the Spidey-verse. .. $2.25

Punisher 11 *(Kitchen Irish* 5 of 6; Garth Ennis & Leandro Fernandez); *MAX Comics)* Finn Cooley's got the kind of face only a mother could love – and Frank Castle can't wait to put a hollow point right between his eyes. ... $2.99

She-Hulk 7 (Dan Slott & Juan Bobillo) As a superhuman lawyer, She-Hulk has tried some of the strangest cases on Earth... but all of that is about to change! $2.99

Spectacular Spider-Man 19 *(Changes* 3 of 4; Paul Jenkins & Humberto Ramos) Spidey must once again confront the architect of his metamorphosis – the Queen! $2.25.

Thanos Vol 5: Samaritan (Keith Giffen & Ron Lim; tpbk) At the very edge of existence, Thanos has a fateful encounter with his lost love, Death, which causes him to re-evaluate his goals and his approach to attaining them. 144pg ..... $14.99.

Thor: Son of Asgard 8 *(Enchanted* 2 of 3; Akira Yoshida & Greg Tocchini) It was bad enough that Sif had to compete with Amora the Enchantress for Thor's affections. But with the arrival of the beautiful warrior exchange student, Brunnhilda, all bets are off. $2.99

Ultimate Nightmare 2 *(Nightmare* 2 of 5; Warren Ellis & Trevor Hairsine) In Tunguska, Russia, teams led by Charles Xavier and Nick Fury appear in an area rife with mutations and – far, far more. $2.25

Ultimate X-Men 51 *(Cry Wolf* 2 of 4; Brian K. Vaughan & Andy Kubert) Gambit gives hints of where he's been, what he wants and why the X-Men will not be happy about it. $2.25

Ultimate X-Men Vol 9: The Tempest (Brian K. Vaughan & Brandon Peterson; tpbk) Even the strongest family can be ripped apart by tragedy, and the death of one of their own leaves the remaining X-Men struggling to deal with the loss. Collects Ultimate X-Men #46-49. 112pg $10.99

Illuminations

Highlights from September's releases

Selected by Martin "Biff" Averre

Two **Previews** have arrived since last issue so there's a lot of comics to choose from. The pick of the August releases are: DC is the leader in low-priced comics initiatives and **Batman: The 12 Cent Adventure**, the lead into the three-month Bat universe crossover event, *Batman: War Games*, is this year's undoubted bargain. Despite the fact that a vociferous minority criticise such events, you cannot deny the obvious: sales on all titles increase, even on the core **Batman** and **Detective** titles. Don't pretend you don't want to get involved, or that you're too smart to enjoy exploitation, just go with the flow, admit that deep down you enjoy these events. I do. Retailers: Buy as many as you can spare the cash for. **Sales 5/5 Quality 4 to 5/5**

The Ultimate titles from Marvel have proven to be its biggest success in years. Every one is brimming with talent and gives a great read. Therefore it will come as no surprise when I recommend **Ultimate Nightmare**, a five-issue series by Warren Ellis with art by Trevor Hairsine that tells a story of international intrigue as world communications break down and a team is selected to go to the source of the problem, Tanguska, Russia. **Ultimate War** and **Ultimate Six** broke sales records for minis at the Ace stores and I expect this to reach similar heights. **Sales 5/5 Quality 5/5**

Sam Kieth, currently creating Batman mini **Scratch**, is also working on a private project being released by Oni Press, **OJO**. With art by Alex Pardee this is the tale of a young girl called Annie, who normally has bad luck with pets. Hamsters tremble at the thought of living with her. Then she finds a little beastie stuck in a drain pipe called OJO, has her luck changed? **Sales 2/5 (should be higher – he is a gifted writer/artist) Quality 5/5**

In September Marvel has gone crazy, with 15 minis, five oneshots and seven new series. A little difficult to judge sales potential when, even if good, they are competing against each other as well as against other companies' new titles. Case in point: **Nightcrawler**, **Jubilee** and **Gambit** ongoing series plus **Maddox**, a five-issue mini. If these releases had been staggered sales would be far higher. **Sales 3/5 Quality4/5**

The really strong title and the worst title from Marvel both star old characters rewritten. The worst looking is **Warlock**, a travesty of the original so, 'nuff said. The best is **Strange**, a retelling of Doctor Strange by J. Michael Straczynski. He has proven with his work on **Amazing Spider-Man** and **Supreme Power** that not only is he consistently good, but sales stay high. Add to this the art of Brandon Peterson and this title gets a Biff 6 out of 5. **Sales 5/5 Quality 5/5**

Over at DC, *Batman War Games* continues throughout September, so there is only, sensibly, one major new release from the company: **Adam Strange**. This character was first seen in **Showcase** #17 in 1959, then **Mystery In Space** #53 to 100, finishing in #102 during the Sixties and a three-issue prestige mini in 1990, and has a special place in many long-time fans' hearts. This means a writer of ability is required to make this series work, a writer like Andy Diggle whose work on **Swamp Thing** is excellent. Pascual Ferry has turned in what must be his best art ever and captured the mood of wonderment that this series needs. **Sales 5/5 Quality 5/5**

In **CI** #173, I listed at number 5 **The Gift** as a comic most requested by my customers. As luck would have it Overcast Comics is offering the set of 1 to 5 this month for only $9.95 (£6.50) as a lead in to its move to Image next month. Rush down now to your local store and ask them to order this set in for you. You will not be disappointed. **Sales should be 5/5 Quality 5/5**

With 23 years of comics retail experience as Ace Comics, Biff also produced his ***Illuminations*** *monthly fanzine for 19 years, before moving it to the web.*

X-Force #2 (Fabian Nicieza & Rob Liefeld) Cable completes the assembly of his team, adding a few more familiar faces to his ranks. $2.99

X-Men: The End Book 1: Dreamers & Demons #3 (Chris Claremont & Sean Chen) Chris Claremont's take on the closing days of the X-Men, with art by Sean Chen. $2.99

ON SALE FROM

SEPT 15

Dark Horse

Freaks of the Heartland 5 (Stev Niles & Greg Ruth) After the violent death of their father, Trevor Owen and his brother Will have very little time to find their way to the relative safety of the outside world. Mature. $2.99

Grendel: Devil's Reign 5 (of 7; Matt Wagner & Tim Sale) After a brash but decisive attack on the kidnappers' compound, Sherri Caniff has been rescued. Mature readers. $3.50

DC Comics

Adventures of Superman 632 (Greg Rucka & Matthew Clark and Nelson) A new villain emerges and turns public opinion against the Man of Steel. $2.50

Batman: Gotham Knights 57 *(War Games* Act 2, Part 4; A.J. Lieberman & Al Barrionuevo and Francis Portela) With Gotham City plunged into a blackout, Tarantula attempts to take down the Penguin... but she'll have to get through Deadshot first. $2.50

oneshot **Batman in the Eighties** (various; tpbk) *See Close-Up, below.*

new **The Batman Strikes!** 1 (Bill Matheny & Christopher Jones + Terry Beatty) When the vengeful Penguin pulls a heist that could reveal Wayne's secret and destroy vast portions of the city, the Batman will have to use every resource at his disposal. $2.25

Birds of Prey 74 (Gail Simone & Ed Benes) The Birds clash over tactics, while Canary solos on a much more personal mission. $2.59

The Books of Magick: Life During Wartime 3 (Neil Gaiman + Si Spencer & Dean Ormston; *Vertigo)* After a series of magical attacks, Tim's friendship with the mysterious stranger Brewster deepens, much to the concern of Molly. $2.50

final issue **Fraction** 6 (David Tischman & Timothy Green II) They've survived a full-scale attack by the Suit's makers, kept the Philadelphia cops at bay, and strengthened their loyalty to one another But where do four small-town boys' lives go from here? $2.50

Hawkman 32 (Jimmy Palmiotti + Justin Gray & Joe Bennett + Ruy Jose) Hawkman and The Atom travel to the frozen wastelands of Antarctica, where they uncover a hidden city built during World War II. $2.50

oneshot **Hellblazer: Setting Sun** (Warren Ellis & various; *Vertigo;* tpbk) Features five bone-chilling tales of horror, magic, loss and regret with art by five world-class illustrators, originally presented in Hellblazer #140-143. 96pg $12.95

Human Target #14 (Peter Milligan & Cliff Chiang; *Vertigo)* The new Messiah has arrived, and he's dressed like a pop star. But does the teenaged Paul James really believe he's actually the Second Coming? $2.95

Identity Crisis #4 (Brad Meltzer & Rags Morales + Michael Bair) How could anyone get past the Thanagarian, Martian, Apokoliptian and Kryptonian security systems installed since the murder of a loved one in Identity Crisis #1? 40pg $3.95

oneshot **JLA Secret Files 2004** (various) When two unexpected threats menace the world, the JLA and the Elite must bring about multiple defeats 48pg $4.95

JSA: Strange Adventures 2 (Kevin J. Anderson & Barry Kitson + Gary Erskine) Lord Dynamo and his robot-zombie henchmen continue to wreak havoc until he offers to save the human race, cure all diseases and end world hunger. 40pg $3.50

Powerpuff Girls 54 (Abby Denson + Amy Rogers & Christopher Cook + Mike DeCarlo) A fishing trip leads to a fish-monster rampage, but will Bubbles side with her sisters or the bad guy? $2.25

Sinister Dexter: Gunshark Vacation (Dan Abnett & various; tpbk) Welcome to Downlode, future European megalopolis and home to the two best gunsharks money can hire: motor-mouth Finnegan Sinister and laconic, ice-cool Ramone Dexter. 128pg $14.95

oneshot **Swamp Thing: Regenesis** (Rick Veitch & Veitch + Alfredo Alcala; *Vertigo)* Collects Swamp Thing #65-70. After his joyful reunion with his beloved Abby, the thing that was once called Alec Holland must now face the consequences of his long journey through space. 160pg $17.95

Terra Obscura Vol 2 #2 (Alan Moore + Peter Hogan & Yanick Paquette + Karl Story; *America's Best Comics)* With a mysterious craft nearing the planet, the Pentagon decides upon the only non-military solution they have: send Tom Strange into space to investigate! $2.95

Marvel

Cable/Deadpool #7 (Fabian Nicieza & Patrick Zircher) A floating city promises hope for humans and mutants alike. But if Cable plans to be Earth's saviour, will Deadpool accept the role of Judas? $2.99

Captain Marvel Vol 4: Odyssey (Peter David & Aaron Lopresti; tpbk) It's the long-awaited return of Rick Jones' wife, Marlo. But her arrival may not be the upbeat event Rick had been hoping for, especially when the first thing she attempts to do is annihilate the new Captain Marvel! 160pg $16.99

Daredevil 64 *(The Widow* 4 of 4; Brian Michael Bendis, pencils and cover by Alex Maleev; *Marvel Knights)* Who is behind the assassination attempts against the Widow? And what kind of future do Natasha and Matt have together? $2.99

Doctor Spectrum 2 (Samm Barnes & Travel Foreman, creative consultant J. Michael Straczynski; *MAX Comics)* Figures from Joe Ledger's past continue to haunt him, as the government searches for a way to solve the Hyperion problem! $2.99

Fantastic Four 518 *(Fourtitude* 2 of 3; Mark Waid & Mike Wieringo) Which member of the team will make a decision that will radically change the Fantastic Four for some time to come? $2.99

Guardians 4 *(Reach for the Stars* 4 of 5; Marc Sumerak & Casey Jones) Their childhood fantasies have finally come true as the grown-up Guardians rocket into outer space on the adventure of a lifetime! $2.99

Invaders 2 *(To End All Wars* 2 of 3; Allan Jacobsen & C.P. Smith) A secret society of madmen and monsters, a battleship with world-threatening weaponry, the return of a forgotten hero, and the birth of a new heroine are just the beginning. $2.99

new **Madrox** 1 (Peter David & Pablo Raimondi; *Marvel Knights)* Which is the real Jamie Madrox? In this noir-esque thriller of a l mited series, it's possible that even Madrox doesn't know any more. $2.99

Man-Thing 3 (Hans Rodionoff & Kyle Hotz; *Marvel Knights)* The Man-Thing movie prequel concludes with a horrific showdown with Man-Thing as you've never seen it before. $2.99

Marvel Age Runaways Vol 2: Teenage Wasteland Digest (Brian K. Vaughan & Adrian Alphona + Takeshi Miyazawa) Still on the run from their supervillain parents, this motley crew of superpowered kids finds a kindred spirit in a daring young stranger and welcomes him into their fold. Collects Runaways #7-12. 144pg $7.99

new **Marvel Age Spider-Man Team-Up** 1 (Todd Dezago & Michael O'Hare) Our friendly neighbourhood webslinger and New York's favourite superteam do their best to put aside their differences. $1.75

Mary Jane 4 (Sean McKeever & Takeshi Miyazawa) Liz Allen is sure Flash is cheating on her! If she can't trust her best friend Mary Jane to help her dig up the dirt, who can she trust? .. $2.25

New X-Men 5 *(Choosing Sides* 5 of 6; Christina Weir & Michael Ryan) The school is divided over the fate of young Kevin Ford, the mutant whose very touch can kill. $2.99

Spider-Man/Doctor Octopus: Year One #4 (Zeb Wells & Kaare Andrews) As poisonous radiation courses through his bloodstream, a vicious Doctor Octopus cracks the secret of Spider-Man and prepares for a battle that will forever define his relationship with the wall crawler. $2.99

new **Strange** 1 (J. Michael Straczynski + Samm Barnes & Brandon Peterson; *Marvel Knights)* Brash young surgeon Dr Stephen Strange is on a collision course with destiny – a journey that will force him to search the deepest corners of his own heart. $3.50

Weapon X 28 *(Man and Superman* 3 of 3; Frank Tieri & Tom Mandrake) Sabretooth comes one step closer to discovering a sinister secret about his past... but will it be this step that drives him over the edge? $2.99

Wolverine 19 *(Return of the Native* 7 of 7; Greg Rucka & Darick Robertson; *Marvel Knights)* The finale to Greg Rucka's run on Wolverine, featuring a guest appearance by Nightcrawler. $2.25

X-Men 161 *(Heroes and Villains* 1 of 4; Chuck Austen & Salvador Larroca) The Brotherhood of Mutants is back with Nocturne from the Exiles, and a surprise shocker of a member. $2.25

ON SALE FROM

SEPT 22

Dark Horse

Conan 8 (Kurt Busiek & Greg Ruth) The legend of Conan begins in the middle of a Cimmerian war – and his incredible strength and skill are accredited to the fact that he was *Born on the Battlefield.* $2.99

oneshot **Fused: Think Like a Machine** (Steve Niles & Josh Medors + Peter Repovski; tpbk) Mark Haggerty was a promising young robotics engineer with a smart, sexy wife and a bright future just within his grasp – until his body became fused with an experimental robot suit during a routine testing session. Collects the four-issue miniseries. 112pg $12.95

Go Boy 7 Vol 2: The Human Factor (Brian Augustyn & Jon Sommariva + Todd Demong; tpbk) In this collection, the Cultist's devastating creativity with anarchic giga-technology threatens civilisation yet again, and an enigmatic new player is in town: BioAgent! Collects #5-8 of the series. 96pg $12.95

Hellsing Vol 4 (Kohta Hirano; tpbk) The Nazis, having hidden in South America for generations, have engineered an army of vampires, and are preparing for an all-out campaign of deathly dominance. 192pg b&w $13.95

The Nail 4 (of 4; Rob Zombie + Steve Niles & Nat Jones) With one member of the group already murdered,, one thing becomes clear: If the demons on wheels get their way, there's no hope of making it out alive. Mature. . $2.99

DC Comics

Batgirl 56 *(War Games* Act 2, Part 6; Dylan Horrocks & Mike Huddleston and Jesse Delperdang) Batgirl takes on Lynx and the Shadow Dragons, who aim to take over Leslie Thompkins' clinic and make it their own private hospital. $2.50

new **Cartoon Network Block Party** 1 (various) An all-new anthology packed with adventures and puzzles. $2 25

Catwoman 35 *(War Games* Act 2, Part 7; Ed Brubaker & Paul Gulacy and Jimmy Palmiotti) While Selina fights for her turf against the Ravens, the Dark Knight races toward a meeting that will swing the war in his favour – even though he's unknowingly about to aid his biggest enemy. $2.50

oneshot **Chaland Anthology Vol 1: Freddy Lombard** (Yves Chaland; tpbk) Freddy Lombard and friends go on four adventures spanning Belgian castles and African jungles. These stories exhibit the elegant design that made Chaland a legend among cartoonists and animators worldwide. 136pg $17.95

Doom Patrol Vol 2: The Painting That Ate Paris (Grant Morrison & Richard Case + John Nyberg; *Vertigo;* tpbk) Reprints issues #26-34, including the rise of the legendary Brotherhood of Dada – the only team of superfoes ever strange enough to rival the Doom Patrol itself – as well as the menace of the Decreator and the return of Monsieur Mallah and the Brain from the original Brotherhood of Evil. $19.95

new **Elric: The Making of a Sorcerer** 1 (of 4; Michael Moorcock & Walter Simonson) The adventure begins as young Elric literally dreams of a life of adventure. His first dream quest takes him from the Dragon Caves of Imrryr to confrontations with temperamental giants in journeys through strange kingdoms! 48pg $5.95

Ex Machina 4 *(State of Emergency* 3 of 4; Brian K. Vaughan & Tony Harris + Tom Feister; *WildStorm)* Mayor Mitchell Hundred realises that someone from his superheroic past as The Great Machine may very well have a connection to the snowplow murders plaguing the city. $2.95

close-up

Batman in the Eighties

DC Comics

Writers/Artists: various

Nine of the best Batman stories of the 1980s are presented. Includes *Shadow Play* (from Batman #348), *He With Secrets Fears the Sound* (Detective Comics #518), *When Velvet Paws Caress the Ground* (Detective Comics #519), *To Kill a Legend* (Detective Comics #500), *Transition* (New Titans #55), and more. With introduction and chapter notes by comics historian John Wells. 192pg $19.95

ON SALE SEPTEMBER 15

The Flash 214 *(Sins of the Father* 1 of 3; Geoff Johns & Howard Porter + Livesay) The Flash has a personal crisis when he discovers that not everything he believed about the legacy of Barry Allen is true. $2.25

H-E-R-O 20 *(Picking up the Pieces* 2 of 4; Will Pfeifer & Dale Eaglesham + Wade von Grawbadger) Former H-device user Tony Finch finally has his chance to be a supervillain thanks to a superpowered maniac. $2.50

JLA Vol 14: Trial By Fire (Joe Kelly & Doug Mahnke + Tom Nguyen; tpbk) Collects JLA #84-89. The surviving members of the JLA unravel the secret of a creature of unimaginable power and fight to prevent it from unleashing World War III. 144pg $12.95

Kinetic 7 (Kelley Puckett & Warren Pleece) Tom faces his greatest challenge: winning the heart of a girl! No superpowers can help him now! All of the immaturity, none of the responsibility. $2.50

oneshot **The Life Eaters** (David Brin & Scott Hampton; *WildStorm;* graphic novel) *See Close-Up, right.*

Lucifer 54 *(The Wolf Beneath the Tree* 4 of 4; Mike Carey & Peter Gross + Ryan Kelly; *Vertigo)* Lucifer, Michael and Elaine have pursued Fenris, god of destruction, to the roots of the world-tree to head off the end of all Creation – but their plans come to nothing when Fenris enlists one of them as an ally. $2.50

Manhunter 2 (Mark Andreyko & Jesus Saiz + Jimmy Palmiotti) After her first night out as Manhunter, Kate Spencer is black and blue and haunted by a foreboding dream. $2.50

Outsiders 16 (Judd Winick & Dwayne Turner + Nelson) Conflicts between Nightwing and Arsenal's leadership come to a head in the aftermath of the Fearsome Five confrontation, and Jade is forced to exert her power over the team. $2.50

Plastic Man 10 (Kyle Baker) What happens when Plastic Man takes on a vampire? $2.95

Robin 130 *(War Games* Act 2, Part 5; Bill Willingham & Jon Proctor and Robert Campanella) Tim and Jack Drake try to help any way they can at the increasingly overrun clinic of Leslie Thompkins. $2.25

Sleeper Season Two 4 (Ed Brubaker & Sean Phillips; *WildStorm)* It's John Lynch vs Holden! But will Lynch be able to convince him to work for I.O. again, or is it all a ploy? $2.95

Smallville 10 (Clint Carpenter & Tom Derenick + Adam DeKraker) Who shot Lionel Luthor? Lex tries to get to the bottom of this mystery, but he might not like what he finds out. 48pg $3.95

oneshot **Starman: Grand Guignol** (James Robinson & Peter Snejbjerg; tpbk) Reprints Starman #61-73. Jack Knight's worst nightmare becomes reality, as Opal City burns to the ground and chaos ensues, with hundreds of villains seizing the chance to strike. 296pg $19.95

Superman/Batman 14 (Jeph Loeb & Carlos Pacheco) In the aftermath of last issue's devastating battle with Darkseid, the Earth wakes up to a brand new world order – one in which Batman and Superman rule with an iron fist. . $2.95

Teen Titans 16 (Geoff Johns & Mike McKone + Marlo Alquiza) Superboy and Wonder Girl's first date is interrupted when a cosmic storm comes to claim Superboy. 32pg $2.50

Tom Strong #28 (Brian K. Vaughan & Cameron Stewart; *America's Best Comics)* Tom's faithful robot servant Pneuman questions himself. Has he fulfilled the duty assigned him by Susan Strong all those years ago? $2.95

The Witching #4 (Jonathan Vankin & Leigh Gallagher + Ron Randall; *Vertigo)* With her face plastered all over TV, Elsa Grimston goes on the lam from both the cops and vigilante thugs in order to perform a bizarre ritual that will bring her closer to her maiden. $2.95

close-up

The Life Eaters

WildStorm

Writer: David Brin

Artist: Scott Hampton

The Axis forces of World War II are propelled to victory over the Allies, prompted by aid from the ancient gods of Norse mythology. Author David Brin and artist Scott Hampton weave a tapestry of a world turned upside down, in which gods walk among us and change the course of human history. 144pg $19.95

ON SALE SEPTEMBER 22

Marvel

Astonishing X-Men 5 *(Gifted* 5 of 6; Joss Whedon & John Cassaday) As demand for the mutant cure reaches near-riot levels, the X-Men finally go head-to-head with Ord. $2.99

Avengers 502 *(Avengers Disassembled* 3 of 4; Brian Michael Bendis & David Finch) Who will fall at the hands of the Avengers' greatest enemy? $2.25

Avengers Vol 5: Once An Invader (various; tpbk) Who is the mysterious figure who claims to be Captain America, and what mission is he recruiting the super-soldiers of past wars to accomplish? Collects Avengers #82-84 and Invaders #0, Avengers (Vol 1) #71 and Invaders Annual #1. 152pg ..... $14.99.

Avengers/Thunderbolts Vol 2: Best Intentions (various; tpbk) Earth's Mightiest Heroes face off against Marvel's Most Wanted! Baron Zemo and the original Thunderbolts are back, but have they returned as friends or foes? 144pg ..... $14.99.

new **Black Widow** 1 (of 6; Richard K. Morgan & Bill Sienkiewicz; *Marvel Knights)* The deadliest agent in the Marvel Universe has finally got out of the spy game, and she's not asking for much, just a life of her own. $2.99

Excalibur 5 *(Food Fight* 1 of 4; Chris Claremont & Aaron Lopresti) Professor Xavier has now assembled his ragtag team of Magneto and Callisto, with youngsters Wicked, Freakshow and Shola under their tutelage. $2.99

Loki 4 (Robert Rodi, painted art and cardstock cover by Esad Ribic; *Marvel Knights)* Thor's free and he's ready to bring pain to his ne'er-do-well scheming brother. Or does Loki have a few more tricks up his sleeve? $3.50

Marvel Age Spider-Man 12 (Mike Raicht & Derec Aucoin) Is Spider-Man committing crimes in his sleep? Is he losing his mind? The only one who may know the truth is the man of mystery known only as Mysterio. $2.25

Marvel Masterworks: The X-Men Vol 4 (Roy Thomas & Werner Roth + Don Heck; tpbk) Presents out-of-print stories from X-Men (Vol 1) #32-42 for the first time in 30 years. The X-Men go toe-to-toe against Juggernaut, the Mole Man, Mekano, the Changeling. 240pg ..... $49.99.

Mystique #19 (Sean McKeever & Manuel Garcia) When an assassin's bullet aims for Mystique, the shape-shifting mutant and her enigmatic employer, Shepard, hunt down the source. $2.99

Mystique Vol 2: Tinker, Tailor, Mutant, Spy (Brian K. Vaughan & Michael Ryan + Manuel Garcia; tpbk) Mystique's globe-trotting missions take her everywhere imaginable, but now she's going back to the last place she'd ever imagine – her romantic past. Collects Mystique #7-13. 168pg $17.99

new **Nightcrawler** 1 *(The Devil Inside* 1 of 6; Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa & Darick Robertson) With the looks of a devil and the soul of a kind, ordinary man, Nightcrawler is used to being pulled in both directions, but now he might be asked to go where the other X-Men won't – into the shadows that have always called to him! $2.99

NYX 6 (Joe Quesada & Robert Teranishi; *Marvel Knights)* What if you could become anyone in the world for a day? What would you do? Who would you be? $2.99

Rogue 3 *(Going Rogue* 3 of 6; Rob Rodi & Cliff Richards) As the pieces of the mystery surrounding Rogue's family begin to come together, Rogue finds she may have another problem – her attraction to the mysterious stranger who's been mixed up in this puzzle from the start. $2.99

Silver Surfer 13 (Stacy Weiss & Lan Medina) Gabe and Ellie, the most evolved of the Silver Surfer's abducted children, unleash the prophesied cataclysm on Earth. $2.99

Ultimate Elektra #2 *(Devil's Due* 2 of 5; Mike Carey & Salvador Larroca) Ultimate Kingpin enters the life of the young warrior, Elektra, and he's joined by a mystery killer who's right on target! $2.25

Ultimate Fantastic Four 11 *(Doom* 5 of 6; Warren Ellis & Stuart Immonen) The fledgling Fantastic Four are coming for the man who has built a small monarchy in the middle of Europe – Victor Van Damme. But Van Damme believes he has the perfect weapon to counter the Four. $2.25

Uncanny X-Men 449 *(Guess Who's Back in Town?* 2 of 2; Chris Claremont & Olivier Coipel) A surprise villain with an especially ugly history with Wolverine and a score to settle with Sage is crashing the party. $2.25

Venom vs Carnage 3 (Peter Milligan & Clayton Crain) It's round three of the three-way battle between Venom, Carnage, and a new and possibly even more deadly symbiote. $2.99

ON SALE FROM

SEPT 29

Dark Horse

oneshot **Don Bluth's The Art of Storyboard** (Don Bluth and Gary Goldman; tpbk) Don Bluth takes readers on a journey, going from the breakdown of a script, through story conferences with Don Bluth Films collaborators Gary Goldman and John Pomeroy, and onto the finished boards. 112pg $14.95

oneshot **Hard Boiled** (Frank Miller & Geof Darrow; tpbk) Carl Seltz is an insurance investigator, a loving husband and father. Nixon is a homicidal tax collector racking up a hefty body count. Unit Four is the ultimate robot killing machine – and the last hope of the future's enslaved mechanical servants. And they're all the same psychotic entity. 128pg $16.95

oneshot **Lazarus Jack** (Mark Ricketts & Horacio Domingues; tpbk) *See Close-Up on next page.*

oneshot **Lone** (Stuart Moore & various; tpbk) Ravenous zombies have overrun the post-apocalyptic town of Desolation. Sharpshooter Luke and her older brother, Mark, are desperate. Their only hope is to track down and enlist the help of a gunman legendary in the western wasteland, a man known only as Lone. But if they find him, can they trust him? Collects the six-issue miniseries. 152pg $14.95

M.A.R.S. Patrol Total War (Wally Wood; tpbk) When mysterious invaders appear out of nowhere to wreak havoc and attack every nation on the planet, the Earth's military forces call on an elite team of the most skilled soldiers from all over the world. Reprints the first three issues of the Gold Key science fiction epic. 112pg $12.95

Star Wars: Republic 69 (John Ostrander & Jan Duursema + Dan Parsons) While Jedi Masters Saesee Tiin and Plo Koon fight to prevent a fleet of ships from falling into Separatist hands, Obi-Wan Kenobi discovers that the Separatists have dissension in their own ranks. $2.99

Super Manga Blast! 45 (various) Beginning a new story arc after last issue's *Shadow Star* showdown, the government's investigative team is puzzled, and dark Shadow Dragon plots begin to brew again. Mature readers. 128pg b&w $5.99

DC Comics

new **Adam Strange** 1 (of 8; Andy Diggle & Pascal Ferry) Things have changed drastically for Strange. Once the greatest hero of the distant planet Rann, he's now a wanted man on Earth. Pursued by the police and hunted by aliens, Strange has learned that his adopted planet has been destroyed. With his wife and daughter gone, is there any hope left, or is this the end of the space hero? $2.95

Batman 632 *(War Games* Act 2, Part 8; Bill Willingham & Kinsun and Aaron Sowd) As the gang war rages, Batman comes face to face with one of his deadliest foes: Zeiss! $2.25

oneshot **Batman: Hong Kong** (Doug Moench & Tony Wong; graphic novel) Will the Dark Knight's methods and techniques be effective in a foreign country with different laws and customs? 128pg $17.95

Caper 12 (Judd Winick & Tom Fowler) Lou and Richie have been chased, cursed out, shot at, seduced, and run ragged, all because they have a disembodied hand. $2.95

new **Catwoman: When in Rome** 1 (Jeph Loeb & Tim Sale) Noir chronicling Catwoman's mysterious trip to Italy and her dealings with the deadly Falcone crime family. $3.50

oneshot **Challengers of the Unknown Must Die** (Jeph Loeb & Tim Sale; tpbk) Collects the eight-issue miniseries. Includes a never-before-printed 12-page tale from the same period. 224pg $19.95

DC: The New Frontier 6 (Darwyn Cooke) Post-war America faces a monstrous threat older than Vandal Savage! Will this challenge bring America and its heroes back together or tear them apart? 64pg $6.95

Doom Patrol 4 (John Byrne & Byrne and Doug Hazlewood) The Doom Patrol confront a horrific, ancient species that stands between them and the rescue of a lost team of scientists. $2.50

final issue **Green Lantern** 181 (Ron Marz & Luke Ross + Rodney Ramos) Kyle's ultimate showdown with Major Force rampages across the Earth and beyond, and only one will walk away. ... $2.25

Hellblazer 200 (Mike Carey & Steve Dillon + Marcelo Frusin; *Vertigo)* John Constantine has survived his share of horrifying events: in this month's gala Hellblazer #200, he'll face a threat even he could never envision: married life. 48pg $4.50

JLA 106 *(The Pain of the Gods* 6 of 6; Chuck Austen & Ron Garney) The League confronts the inevitable fact that not everything they do is perceived as being good. But can they regroup to forge ahead with their never-ending battle? $2.25

The Losers 16 *(The Pass* 1 of 4; Andy Diggle & Jock; *Vertigo)* The event that caused The Losers to be left for dead has always remained a mystery – until now. The truth is revealed in a flashback to the fateful mission that forced the Losers to declare their own personal war against the CIA. .. $2.95

Metal Hurlant 13 (various) David Lloyd partners with digital artist Snakebite (The Red Star) for a harsh tale of redemption. 64pg $3.95

Plastic Man Archives Vol 6 (Jack Cole & various; tpbk) Collects features from Plastic Man Comics #5-6 and Police Comics #59-65. Plas faces a super-gunsmith of the underworld, crushes The Crab and more. 204pg $49.95

Richard Dragon 5 (Chuck Dixon & Scott McDaniel + Andy Owens) Detroit has become a slaughterhouse! The police want answers from the Motor City's newest bone-breakers: Richard Dragon and the Bronze Tiger. .. $2.50

Superman 209 (Brian Azzarello & Jim Lee + Scott Williams) Pushed to his mental limits, Superman decides to destroy the cause of the mysterious vanishings in front of the world. $2.50

oneshot **Teen Titans/ Legion Special** (Mark Waid + Geoff Johns & Ivan Reis + Marc Campos) The Titans find themselves in the 31st century, teamed with the Legion against a threat that even their combined might not be able to handle. 48pg $3.50

oneshot **Thundercats: Hammerhand's Revenge** (Fiona Avery & Carlos D'Anda; *WildStorm)* Collects the five-issue miniseries by Fiona Avery and Carlos D'Anda. Hammerhand and the Berzerkers are back – and they've captured Hachiman in an attempt to ransom him to the Japanese Empire. 144pg $14.95

Wonder Woman #208 (Greg Rucka & Drew Johnson + Ray Snyder) Diana travels to the White House to prevent war between the US and Themyscira. But an uninvited guest has different plans for Wonder Woman. $2.25

Marvel

Amazing Fantasy 4 (of 6; Fiona Avery & Mark Brooks) Marvel's newest hero has to survive her first week of training at her new after-school job with a shadowy organisation. .. $2.99

Amazing Spider-Man 512 *(Sins Past* 4 of 5; J. Michael Straczynski & Mike Deodato) The worst defeat that Peter Parker ever endured – a moment frozen in the minds of Spider-Man fans everywhere – was supposed to be far in his past. $2.25

Daredevil 65 (Brian Michael Bendis & Alex Maleev and others; *Marvel Knights)* Daredevil headlines this special, oversized issue celebrating both the 40th anniversary of the character and the fifth anniversary of the Marvel Knights imprint. 48pg $3.99

Elektra: The Hand 2 (Akira Yoshida & Christian Gossett; *Marvel Knights)* In feudal Japan, a single murder fuels one young samurai's struggle for dominance – a struggle that will lead to the inception of this immortal ninja clan. $2.99

Gambit 2 (John Layman & Georges Jeanty) Welcome to the exciting but treacherous terrain of the New Orleans underworld, where Gambit's skills and mastery are unquestioned. $2.99

Kabuki 2 (David Mack; *Icon Comics)* After escaping the institution for defective government agents, Kabuki follows Akemi's directions to meet someone who can give her a new identity and a plane ticket out of Japan to evade the Noh and start a new life. ..... $2.99.

oneshot **Marvel Knights 2099: Black Panther** 1 (Robert Kirkman & Kyle Hotz; *Marvel Knights)* Doctor Doom of Latveria has turned his sights on Wakanda; an invasion is imminent. But where is the Black Panther? $2.99

oneshot **Marvel Knights 2099: Daredevil** 1 (Robert Kirkman & Steve Epting; *Marvel Knights)* Samuel Fisk struggles to balance his life with the duty he has accepted in order to continue the works of those that have come before him. Samuel Fisk is Daredevil! $2.99

oneshot **Marvel Knights 2099: Inhumans** 1 (Robert Kirkman & Cliff Rathburn; *Marvel Knights)* The Inhumans left for a life amongst the stars, and after a 50-year journey they have arrived at their destination $2.99

oneshot **Marvel Knights 2099: Mutant** 1 (Robert Kirkman & Khary Randolph; *Marvel Knights)* Registered mutant 2099, Chad Channing, is a mild-mannered high school student at Baxter High. He takes his mutant gene suppression pills every morning and his parents couldn't be more proud of him. $2.99

oneshot **Marvel Knights 2099: Punisher** 1 (Robert Kirkman & Pop Mhan; *Marvel Knights)* Cassondra Castle is old, her time is coming to an end, but there are still plenty who need punishment. Her son Franklin's life is about to change drastically. $2.99

new **Marvel Knights Spider-Man Vol 1: Down Among The Dead Men** (Mark Millar & Terry Dodson; tpbk) A mysterious villain has discovered Spider-Man's secret identity and is using the information to slowly destroy everything and everyone that Peter Parker cares about. 96pg $9.99

oneshot **Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe: Daredevil/ Elektra 2004** (various; *Marvel Knights)* Whatever happened to Turk? Just how many times has Elektra died and come back to life? And who the heck is Mike Murdock? 48pg .. $3.99

Powerless #4 (Matt Cherniss and Peter Johnson & Michael Gaydos) Was it the radioactive spider bite that made Peter Parker a hero and Norman Osborn a villain? Or was it destiny? $2.99

oneshot **Witches** Vol 1 (Brian Walsh & Mike Deodato Jr. + Will Conrad; tpbk) Doctor Strange, Earth's Sorcerer Supreme, recruits three young witches – Jennifer Kale, Topaz and Satana – to find the mysterious Tome of Zhered-Na, which threatens to destroy the entire world. Collects Witches #1-4. 96pg ..... $9.99.

new **Wolverine/Punisher** Vol 1 (Peter Milligan & Lee Weeks; tpbk) Deep in the South American jungle there's a place of legend – a final refuge where the nastiest of the nasty can disappear from the prying eyes of the world. Collects Wolverine/ Punisher #1-5. 120pg $13.99

X-Men #162 *(Heroes and Villains* 2 of 4; Chuck Austen & Salvador Larroca) The Brotherhood of Mutants is back with Nocturne from the Exiles, and a surprise shocker of a member. $2.25

RELEASED AND ON SALE IN

SEPTEMBER

Abstract Studio

Strangers in Paradise Vol 2 (Terry More; tpbk) Continues the Strangers in Paradise story with Katchoo, David, Francine and the gang. Collects issues #1-15 of Vol 3, plus the infamous Xena parody. 344pg b&w $17.95

Amaze Ink/ Slave Labor

Bear 6 (Jamie Smart) Bear suffers the spooky torments of the unnerving Silence doll, plus more swearing, hitting and running about than you can shake a corpse leg at. Mature readers. $2.95

Gloomcookie 21 (Serena Valentino & Harley Sparx) Sebastian and his monster head to New Orleans in an attempt to save Chrys, Damion and Lex from Marguerite's evil carnival. Mature readers. 24pg b&w $2.95

new **Little Scrowlie** Vol 1 (Todd Meister & Jen Feinberg) Collects issues #1-4, chronicling the adventures of a scrowlie cat and her friends in their cosmic battle with an evil straight out of today's headlines. 120pg b&w $10.95

Little Scrowlie 7 (Todd Meister & Jen Feinberg) After rescuing James from the clutches of an evil succubus, the fierce Lick Monsters of the Nether Regions find themselves pursued by a demonic horde intent on reintegrating their human captive into his proper role. 24pg b&w $2.95

Nightmares & Fairy Tales 10 (Serena Valentino) Annabelle recalls the story of a beautiful woman who is betrayed by her monstrous father 24pg b&w $2.95

Street Angel 3 (Jim Rugg & Brian Maruca) On the eve of their destruction, a desperate congregation finds an injured Street Angel on their church steps. 24pg b&w $2.95

Antarctic Press

Dictators: Saddam Hussein 2 (of 2; Ted Nomura) Following Saddam's career from his peak of power through the turbulence of Desert Storm, culminating in his capture. b&w$3.95

oneshot **Gold Digger Annual 2004** (various) Readers and fans show an appreciation of Fred Perry's title by drumming up their own designs. 48pg b&w $4.95

Gold Digger Perfect Memory 4 (Fred Perry) Revealing all the intricacies of issues #26-50, shedding light on the mysteries of Jade, Earth, the Dragons and much more. 72pg b&w $5.95

oneshot **Gold Digger: Pink Slip** (Thor Thorvaldson; graphic novel) Pee Wee Talon decides his elite minions can't hack it, so he hires replacements. 120pg b&w $9.99

Heaven Sent 5 (Ben Dunn) Kyle's training continues as he discovers the secret behind his mother's death and the forces working in both Heaven and Hell to control the fate of mankind. b&w $2.99

I Hunt Monsters 7 (Rod Espinosa & Craig Babiar) Tayesha shows her stuff, tackling the Minions of Evil with motor revving and guns blazing. b&w $2.99

Luftwaffe: 1946 Annual 2 (various) Stories of history gone awry, plus past-imperfect vignettes from Belgian artist Marcel Magnette. 48pg b&w ... $4.95

Neotopia Vol 4 #2 (Rod Espinosa) Holding Nalyn captive, General Kaizler finally reaches his warship. $2.99

oneshot **Ninja High School Yearbook 2004** (various) Featuring high-jinx with all the usual gang, from Jeremy, Ichi, Asrial, Professor Steamhead, Arnie and Mimi. 48pg b&w $4.95

Archie Comics

oneshot **Adventures of Little Archie** (Bob Bolling; tpbk) Some of the best and earliest Little Archie stories are compiled in this special volume. 96pg $10.95

Archie & Friends 86 (Craig Boldman & Rex Lindsey) The hottest ticket in town is no longer the Archies, but an Archies tribute band! $2.19

Betty 141 (various) Can Veronica survive losing the title of Swan Queen to Betty? $2.19

Betty & Veronica 203 (various) With the swank Country Club dance just days away, Veronica enlists Betty's help in choosing the perfect date to go with her designer purse. $2.19

Sabrina the Teenage Witch #61 (Tania del Rio) Conveniently forgotten invitations to Amy's Halloween party as well as Amy talking up her witch friend Gwen, leaves Sabrina feeling disconcerted. $2.19

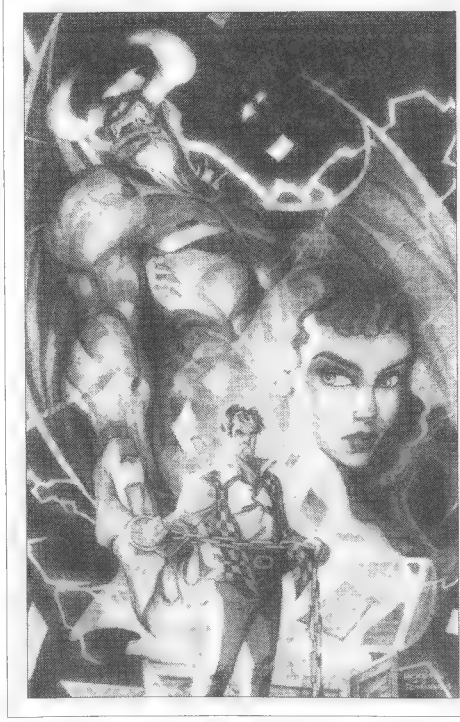
Sonic the Hedgehog #141 *(The Return to Angel Island* 4 of 4; Ken Penders & Steven Butler + Jim Amash) Will the combined might of Sonic, Knuckles and the Chaotix be enough to end the tyranny of Dr Robotnik and keep their lives from hanging in the balance? $2.19

Avatar

Stargate SG-1: Fall of Rome 2 (James Anthony & Jorge Correa) SG1 comes face to face with the banished System Lord Mars and discovers an incredible buried secret. Variant covers. $3.99

oneshot **Warren Ellis' Apparat** Preview (Warren Ellis & various) This special preview book features pages from each of the first four one shot titles as well as all-new essays from Ellis about each one. b& w, 16 pages $1.99

new **Brian Pulido's Belladonna** 1 (of 5; Brian Pulido & Clint Hilinski) Colleen MacGrath's wedding to Donovan was to unite two powerful Irish families in bliss. Instead, all their hopes and dreams were laid to waste by marauding Vikings. Now a year later, on Samhain,



close-up

Lazarus Jack

Dark Horse

Writer: Mark Ricketts

Artist: Horacio Domingues

Plagued by an incident that cost him his family, magician Jackson Pierce struggles to reclaim them by embarking on a terrifying, nonstop, dimension-hopping thrill ride. On this journey through fantastic worlds, Jackson undergoes disturbing transformations, falls prey to an insane sorceror, defies zero gravity, and confronts the demons from his past. 128pg $14.95

ON SALE SEPTEMBER 29

Morrigan the Celtic goddess forces Colleen to rise and claim vengeance as Belladonna! Variant covers. $3.99

oneshot **Brian Pulido's Unholy Preview** (Brian Pulido & Di Amorim) Unholy is the story of Penny, a stoner, rebel, teen who is a nonbeliever in God. After a fatal accident, she's drafted by God to be His assassin, a God she doesn't even believe in. 16 pages b& w $1.99

oneshot **Brian Pulido's Gypsy Preview** (Brian Pulido & Paulo Sequeira) Sisters Antoinette and Liza are gypsy thieves in England 1879 who love to trick the townspeople out of their money and their belongings. Variant covers. 16 pages b& w $1.99

new **Brian Pulido's Killer Gnomes** 1 (Brian Pulido & Eddy Barrows) While at a newly opened nursery Brad bought a smiling garden gnome that he hoped would protect his garden. But he didn't know the nursery hid a deadly secret that would cost hundreds of people their lives. Variant cover. b&w $3.50

Yuggoth Creatures 3 (Antony Johnston & various) The final volume of Anders Ericsson's memoirs. Join the Professor as he chronicles his last adventures through the Lovecraft Mythos, takes matters into his own hands and searches for the key that could save the world. Mature readers. Variant cover. $3.99

Warren Ellis' Strange Killings: Necromancer 6 (of 6; Warren Ellis & Mike Wolfer) His mission was to kill one American reporter on a secluded Philippine island. Now Sergeant Major William Gravel will learn the true motive behind his assignment and uncover a more far-reaching conspiracy. Mature readers. b&w $3.50

Joe R Lansdale's By Bizarre Hands 5 (Joe R Lansdale & Andres Guinaldo) Two red necks get in way over their heads with some mafiosos who don't take kindly to folks like them Mature readers. b&w $3.50

Bongo Comics

Bart Simpson's Treehouse of Horror 10 (various) Hallowe'en inspired collection of terrible tales, featuring a raft of guest writers – Alice Cooper, Gene Simmons and Rob Zombie. 48pg $4.99

Claypool

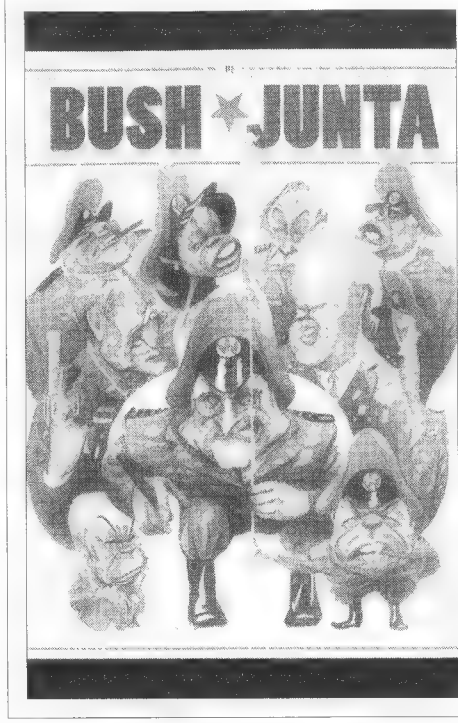
Elvira 137 (various) Elvira is menaced by a potted plant turned evil, in *Little Crop of Terror*. b&w $2.50

Soulsearchers 68 (various) A sexy South Sea idyll leads Bridget and Baraka into peril from some South Seas idols, while back in Mystic Grove, the Stateside Soulsearchers see a new aspect of the kooky kidnappings as they fight to save Chlora Fille. b&w $2.50

Soulsearchers & Company 2 (various; tpbk) Features issues #7-12 of the Soulsearchers' monthly comic, including the three-part *Toadies* saga. 152pg $12.95

Deadbeats 2: Learning the Game! (various; tpbk) The Deadbeats are running wild in Fear City. They're a cruel and crafty vampire gang, and their mission could result in utter destruction of the entire town. 160pg b&w $12.95

Elvira Mistress of the Dark #2: Double Delights! (various; tpbk) As a new century beckons, it's time to think about what made the last one great. b&w 152pg $12.95



close-up

The Bush Junta

Fantagraphics Books

Writers/Artists: various

An international line-up of cartoonists take on the Bush administration of high crimes and misdemeanours. Just in time for the election! This is a fact-based and, it says here, impeccably researched piece of comics journalism, chronicling the Bush administration in the context of the Bush family dynasty that spawned it. Good for a laugh, we reckon. Good for a cry, we're certain. 200pg b&w $18.95

ON SALE SEPTEMBER

Drawn and Quarterly

Palookaville 17 (Seth) It's 1966 and Seth peers further into the life of Simon Matchcard. Simon, by now a failed salesman, loses what was at best a tenuous grip on reality. Mature readers. 24pg $4.95

DreamWave

Transformers Energon 27 (Simon Furman & Alex Milne) Things go from bad to worse to utterly desperate for the Autobots and humans as Alpha Quintesson unleashes a three-pronged strike. $2.95

Transformers Generation One #9 (Brad Mick & Don Figueroa) With the Autobot army focusing its efforts on building a new headquarters on Earth and Cybertron's moons, the time is right for Megatron to make a triumphant return. $2.95

Transformers Micromasters 4 (Adam Patyk + Brad Mick & Rob Ruffolo) As Skystalker consolidates his power, a confrontation with Countdown is inevitable. $2.95

new **Transformers War Within: The Age of Wrath** 1 (Simon Furman & Joe Ng) Cybertron is conquered, the Autobots enslaved, and the planet itself is brutally torn asunder. $2.95

Transformers War Within Vol 2 (Simon Furman & Andrew Wildman) With Optimus Prime and Megatron both missing and presumed dead, civil war era Cybertron descends into a pitched battle for survival between multiple factions. 168pg $17.95

Fantagraphics

Blood Orange 3 (various) Quarterly anthology. Features European cartoonists of some obscurity, alongside more known names, such as Anders Nilsen and Steven Weissman. Mature. 48pg b&w $5.95

oneshot **The Bush Junta** (various; graphic novel) *See Close-Up, above.*

oneshot **The Comics Go To Hell** (Fredrik Stromberg) Examining how cartoonists through the ages have used the myths about the devil to create the manifold variations of the Prince of Darkness in comics. 360pg b&w $18.95

oneshot **Shouldn't You Be Working** (Johnny Ryan) Revealing how Ryan spends his spare time: Sitting at home, alone and naked, obsessively filling sketchbooks. Mature. 80pg b&w $5.95

Image Comics

Casefiles: Sam & Twitch 17 *(Ancient Chinese Secret, Huh?* 5 of 6; Marc Andreyko & Andy Lee) Not only are Sam and Twitch hip deep in heroin, dead Chinese gang casualties and a 700-year old, extremely pissed-off vampiress, but Twitch is going to be late for his daughter's school play. Mature readers. b&w $2.95

Deep Sleeper 4 (of 4; Phil Hester & Mike Huddleston) Cole's journey of loss and redemption comes to a mind-bending conclusion in a final confrontation with the unstoppable Dervish and his master, the immortal Ramman. Will Cole lose his soul to save his family? Mature. b&w . $2.95

Forsaken #2 (Carmen Treffiletti & Kristian Donaldson + Nick Zagami) As Delk and the four strangers find themselves face to face with the mysterious Agent Seagraves, the circumstances that led them there are revealed. $2.95

Invincible #17 (Robert Kirkman & Ryan Ottley) Mark Grayson has reached the end of his high school years. Watch as our hero dons that goofy-looking cap and gown and hope some big supervillain doesn't crash his graduation ceremony. $2.95

Liberty Meadows Book 3: Summer of Love (Frank Cho; hbk) As the summer approaches, Brandy secretly falls in love with Frank. But around the corner, a catastrophe of global proportions awaits. Ain't it always the way? Collects Liberty Meadows #19-27. 144pg b&w $24.95

Masters of the Universe Vol 3 #8 (Ryan Foley & Mike O'Hare) Orko's desire to return home escalates, and he seeks out a way to return to Trolla. In the process, he discovers important clues about Eternia's past and how his ancient relatives played an important part in the history of the world they know. $2.95

Noble Causes 3 (Jay Faerber & Fran Bueno) A source approaches Race and Liz with information that casts Krennick in a bad light. $2.95

NYC Mech 6 (Miles Gunter & Ivan Brandon + Andy MacDonald) The outside reflects the in, as the east coast falls prey to a historic blackout that darkens everything but the night sky. $2.95

oneshot **Puttin' the Backbone Back – An Art Book By Jim Mahfood** (Jim Mahfood; tpbk) Popular underground artist Jim Mahfood has rummaged through his sketchbooks and journals to produce this epic little art book showcasing never-before-seen sketches, girlie drawings, ideas, short comic strips and more. Mature readers. 120pg b&w $9.95

PvP #11 (Scott Kurtz & Erik Larsen + Kurtz) When loveable oaf Skull the Troll is accidentally exposed to the gruesome images, it sends him on an uncontrollable rampage. b&w .. $2.95

oneshot **Rob Zombie's Spook Show International Omnibus** (Rob Zombie & various) Collects issues #3-4 in a special omnibus edition. Mature readers 48pg $4.95

Savage Dragon 118 (Erik Larsen) While unknown forces conspire to put the Savage Dragon into the White House, one of his earliest foes works to put him in the grave $2.95

Savage Dragon: God War 3 (of 3; Robert Kirkman & Mark Englert) The end is nigh! Dragon and what's left of the Gods must unite to stop an ancient evil that threatens to end all life on this planet. $2.95

Small Gods 4 (Jason Rand & Juan E. Ferreyra) Despite the best efforts of precog detective Owen Young and his friends, the secret that will put them all behind bars is about to be revealed. b&w $2.95

Superpatriot: War on Terror #3 (of 4; Robert Kirkman & E.J. Su) Baron Blitzkrieg has begun his whirlwind tour of the USA, conquering town after town on his way. $2.95

oneshot **Syphons** (Allen Curtis & Mark Beachum; tpbk) The story of four young adults endowed with alien siphoning powers. They do not fight crime, but defend Earth from alien assault through the Syphon Gate. Collects Syphons Vol 2, #1-3. 96pg b&w $14.95

Ultra 2 (of 8; Jonathan & Joshua Luna + Jonathan Luna) To Pearl Penalosa, the fortune-teller's prophecy of finding true love within seven days looks doubtful when her idea of a good catch means busting a bad guy with minimal collateral damage. $2.95

Victory Vol 2 #2 (of 4; Robert Marcelo Cassaro & Petra Leao + Edu Francisco) Victory and her newfound companions must push forward to learn the secrets behind their new foe and his plans for the Earth. $2.95

The Walking Dead 12 (Robert Kirkman & Charlie Adlard) At last, it seems like there is a cause that unites mankind to end all our petty squabbles. Mature readers. b&w $2.95

Waterloo Sunset 2 (of 4; Andrew Stephenson & Trevor Goring) Esau has agreed to escort Nina to meet London's overlords, despite the dangers. There, he will meet his forgotten past. 56 pages b&w $6.95

oneshot **Wonderland** (Derek Watson & Kit Wallis; graphic novel) In a future torn apart by conventional, chemical and biological warfare, three teenagers struggle to retain their humanity and survive against seemingly overwhelming odds. 64 pages . $6.95

Humankind 2 (Tony Daniel & Tony Daniel + Kevin Conrad; *Top Cow)* Bruno is on the run, accused of the murder of dozens of people on the planet Thera. The only way to earn his freedom is to fight his way out of a blood-soaked Gladiator arena. $2.99

The Darkness 15 *(Streets Run Red* 2 of 3; Frank Tieri & Martin Montiel + Matt "BATT" Banning; *Top Cow)* Don Alberto has returned from the dead, and Darkness-bearer Jackie Estacado now faces off against a mafia kingpin with unworldly powers. $2.99

oneshot **Myth Warriors** (Robert Place Napton & Ph; *Top Cow;* graphic novel) Eric Volker is a typical skateboarding Los Angeles teenager. But everything changes when he discovers the amulet that controls Ares-an ancient, gigantic mecha warrior. b&w 128 pages $9.99

Witchblade 79 *(t'k'1* of 2; Ian Edginton & Tony Daniel; *Top Cow)* When a powerful player in the Top Cow universe is found dead, NYPD detective and Witchblade-wielder Sara Pezzini is on the case. $2.99

Tomb Raider 46 *(Gathering Storm* 1 of 3; James Bonny & Eric Basaldua; *Top Cow)* Lara Croft is contacted by Witchblade-bearer Sara Pezzini, who informs her that a powerful player in the Top Cow Universe has been murdered. $2.99

oneshot **Alex Ross: Battle of the Planets Artbook** (Alex Ross; *Top Cow)* Celebrate the 25th anniversary of Battle of the Planets with this, showcasing amazing artwork from the smash-hit comic series! 24pg . $2.99

Moonstone

oneshot **I Love a Mystery** 1 (Carlton E.

Morse & Don Sherwood; graphic novel) Jack, Doc and Reggie are a combination of the Three Musketeers and Robin Hood. Watch them encounter a sunken 18th century castle, a mad scientist, and the strange disappearance of a man with an unusual insurance policy. 88pg b&w $10.95

oneshot **Kolchak: The Night Stalker** Vol 1 (various, tpbk) Four complete stories about Carl Kolchak, including a tale of a vampire in Las Vegas, and a clutch of murders in a small mining town. 160pg $17.95

Oni Press

oneshot **Chocolate Thunder** (Jeremy Love & Jeff Wasson; graphic novel) When Kevin King (presumed dead) returns to his old neighbourhood, he finds the community he left behind is now a drug-riddled crime circus. Mature readers 136pg b&w $11.95

oneshot **Courtney Crumrin in the Twilight Kingdom** (Ted Naifeh) When a student spell goes wrong and leaves one of her classmates cursed, can Courtney lead the kids into Goblin Town and find a cure? Mature readers. 128pg b&w $11.95

oneshot **No Dead Time** (Brian McLachlan & Thomas Williams; graphic novel) Nozomi's had it with the record store. If she has to help one more dumb customer she's going to scream. Seth feels the same. Will they hit it off? Mature readers. 136pg b&w. $12.95

Ojo 2 (Sam Kieth) Annie's new pet isn't like the ones she's had before. It's a monster. Can she keep it safe? And everyone else safe? Mature readers. b&w $2.99

Queen & Country 27 (Greg Rucka & Mike Norton) If Tara Chace gets out of this mission alive, rookie agent Chris Lankford is going to have to stay on guard day and night! Mature readers. b&w $2.99

Sirius

Dogwitch 13 (Daniel Schaffer) Still reeling from Dolores' betrayal, Violet now faces more trouble in the form of a bizarre allergy to the psychic fallout left over from Dolores' flesh-swapping spell. Mature. 24pg b&w $2.95

Dogwitch Vol 2: Twisted (Daniel Schaffer; tpbk) B-movie Scream Queen Violet Grimm launches her second season of black magic home movies with an Iron Chef-style culinary experiment – one that goes horribly horrible. Mature 144pg b&w $14.95

new **Poison Elves: Hyena** 1 (Keith Davidsen & Scott Lewis) In the wake of her fallout with the wizard Tenth, Hyena is alone, vulnerable, and hunted by an army of marauding demons. Mature. 24pg b&w $2.95

Tokyopop

A.I. Love You Vol 5 (various) When Hitoshi and gang head to the beach for a little R&R, they get swept up in a nutty competition that's sure to make sparks fly. 264pg $9.99

Battle Royale Vol 9 (various) After Shuuya is nurtured back to health, he discovers his saviour is a group of girls with plans to defeat The Program and escape the island. 200pg $9.99

Battle Vixens Vol 4 (various) In order to become stronger, Hakufu sets off in search of Master Choushou. Upon arrival at the designated shrine, she encounters a little girl who tells her she can only meet Choushou if she can bend one of three swords sticking out of a rock. $9.99

The Candidate for Goddess Vol 4 (various) Friendly as ever, Hiead and Zero get into yet another fight and are put in a detention room that suppresses EX to think about what they've done. $9.99

Comic Party Vol 3 (various) When Kazuki and company find Kingu Jacky's bomb, will they be able to put out the Comic Party pooper? $9.99

new **Crazy Love Story** Vol 1 (various) Hae Jung Shin - a top student in her high school - leads a twisted and bizarre alternate life that no one could possibly imagine. After losing her mother, she's embittered by life and continuously feels victimised by the world. $9.99

The Demon Ororon Vol 4 (various) Ororon is paid a visit from his older brother Oscar, who has always envied his younger brother's power and possible desire to ascend to the throne of hell. $9.99

Deus Vitae Vol 3 (various) After overcoming a perilous ambush, Ash and company meet up with the head office of Reo. There, Lemiu is confronted with a terrible secret from Ash's past $9.99

new **Diabolo** Vol 1 (various) Ren and Rai sold their souls to the devil to save Ren's cousin, Mio. Diabolo gave Ren the power of ultimate defence and Rai the power of ultimate offence. However, those who fall into Diabolo's trap start to go crazy at 17, and at age 18 they reach the point of no return. $9.99

Digimon Tamers Vol 4 (various) The Tamers and Digimon merge, evolving beyond virtual reality – to discover the ultimate Digivolution and more importantly, the power of friendship and responsibility. 192pg $9.99

D.N.Angel Vol 4 (various) While continuing his relentless pursuit to get the scoop on Dark Mousy, Takeshi becomes distracted by a mysterious young woman in a museum. ... $9.99

Dragon Knights Vol 16 (various) Rune discovers Zoma and Kitchel bringing together the spirit and body of Tintlet. But the demon Lim Kaana stumbles upon the happenings, too, and in his anger attacks the group! 200pg $9.99

new **Dragon Voice** Vol 1 (various) Rin Amami is a good looking 15-year old kid with a lot of street smarts, but not much in the way of prospects. A chance encounter with the newest boyband, The Beatmen, allows Rin to follow his dream of being a creator, rather than an imitator. 192pg ... $9.99

Dream Saga Vol 2 (various) While Yuuki and her band of friends continue on their quest to save Takamaganara, the balance between the dream world and the real world is thrown into turmoil $9.99

Et Cetera Vol 2 (various) Mingchao and Baskerville come across a gun crazy collector named Benkate from Baskerville's past. She has collected 99 guns including a three-barrelled revolver, a feline firearm, and a seven foot folding rifle. 208pg $9.99

Eternity Vol 2 (various) Three years ago, Jangbang crushed Sanghoo in a motorcycle race. In retribution, Sanghoo paralysed Jangbang's friend Hwan from the waist down. Now Jangbang's back to draw blood. $9.99

Evil's Return Vol 2 (various) As the Buddhist disciple Sunwoo Hyun continues to contend with the onslaught of possessed students, Chail guides Yumi to safety – or so he thinks. $9.99

The Fairly Odd Parents Vol 3: Father Knows Less (various) Timmy's dad is not the sharpest tool in the shed. But at least Timmy has his fairy godparents to help take the edge off of dad's shortcomings. $7.99

new **Family Guy** Vol 1 (various) Peter Griffin thrives on the virtues of life, liberty and the pursuit of freebies. When he receives a clean bill of health from the hospital, he writes on his chart that he's dead so that he can skip out without paying. Peter might be able to cheat the doctors, but will he be able to cheat death? $7.99

new **The Flower of Deep Sleep** Vol 1 (various) Yuuki is an energetic teenager who carries the disturbing power of foresight in her dreams. She finds that this is tied to the mysterious Deep Sleep that has overtaken her sister, Yuuka. $9.99

Fruits Basket Vol 5 (various) The Sohma household takes to the lake for a vacation. However, the peaceful silence is deafening, as Yuki and Kyo are once again not on speaking terms. 208pg $9.99

GetBackers Vol 5 (various) A newly discovered Van Gogh painting is stolen by the mysterious thief known as Clayman. $9.99

Happy Mania Vol 10 (various) Shigeta finally understands her feelings for Takahashi and accepts them, but is it too late? $9.99

new **Hands Off!** Vol 1 (various) Kotarou Oohira, effeminate bishounen and basketball fanatic, moves in with his Grandpa in Tokyo to attend a co-ed school whose students he hopes will be less judgmental than his all-boys school in the country. $9.99

Immortal Rain Vol 3 (various) Rain and Machika find themselves in The Angel's Graveyard, where they stumble upon a girl frozen in a pillar of ice who is somehow related to Rain. $9.99

Initial D Vol 14 (various) With his reputation growing, Tak gets an offer to join a new racing team. While mulling it over, Tak wants to give the upstart, Kyoichi, a taste of his own medicine. 192pg $9.99

oneshot **The Kindaichi Case Files** (various) When a headless samurai terrorises a provincial village, super sleuth Hajime Kindaichi and Miyuki are on the case $9.99

new **Legal Drug** Vol 1 (various) With no money and no place to stay, Kazahaya was out of luck until fate brought him to the Green Drug pharmacy. Now, in exchange for working in the store, he gets room and board. 196pg $9.99

Les Bijoux Vol 5 (various) The treachery continues to escalate, as one habit after another seeks nothing but revenge in the form of death and destruction $9.99

oneshot **The One I Love** (various) Drawing on CLAMP's own personal experiences, The One I Love provides insight both into the creators' own lives, and into the oft-elusive concept of Love itself $9.99

new **Peach Girl Authentic** Vol 1 (various) Momo's not your typical high school student - she's constantly, completely misunderstood. Not only does she have an undeserved bad reputation, but she can never work up the nerve to tell the boy of her dreams, Toji, how she feels about him. ... $9.99

Priest Vol 13: Strain of the Dispossessed (various) As the bloodiest power struggle ever ignited rides in on the coat-tails of Ivan Isaacs, will the guardian of Windtale be able to protect this last outpost of outcasts? $9.99

new **Rave Master Vol 1: The Quest Begins** (various) The evil Shadow Guard society is threatening civilisation as we know it. When they come to Garage Island and start messing with his friends, Haru is forced into action. 96pg $7.99

Rave Master Vol 11 (various) Haru and the gang barely make it out of the Death Storm but they're just out of the frying pan and into the fire – literally, when they find themselves burning up under the scorching desert sun. 208pg $9.99

Rebirth Vol 10 (various) The golden years of the vampire Deshwitat unfold, as he believes he has finally found his place in this world alongside his friends Kalutika and Rett. $9.99

Rebound Vol 10 (various) Things go from bad to worse as Yuza dazzles the crowd with his dynamic dribbling, dunking and defence. Can Nate and Sawamura get in their groove and make some spectacular plays of their own in spite of Sawamura's injured arm? $9.99

Remote Vol 3 (various) Officer Kurumi finds the main bomb, but is prevented from disarming it by the student body president, who has discovered her and is not pleased that she's not in the classroom with everyone else. $9.99

Samurai Deeper Kyo Vol 9 (various) Oda Nobunaga has a grudge against Kyo that has lasted for ages. Now, Oda has a great and deadly power, which makes him seem invincible 200pg $9.99

The Seikai Trilogy Vol 3: Banner of the Stars II (various) With the success of Operation Phantom Flame, the Abh Empire is now in control of vast amounts of territory once controlled by its enemy, the United Mankind $9.99

oneshot **The Simple Life** (various) From the penthouse to the outhouse, this series follows hotel heiress and nonpareil glitteratti Paris Hilton and her best friend Nicole Richie as they leave behind the comforts of their lavish lifestyle in Los Angeles for a chance to live the simple life. 96pg $7.99

That's So Raven Vol 2 (various) Raven Baxter may seem like a typical teen, and she is, except for one little thing: She's psychic! But what she foresees isn't often what she gets. 96pg $7.99

INTERNATIONAL

Black Library

Inferno! Magazine 44 (various) Al-action fiction anthology, this month dedicated entirely to Uriel Ventris and the Ultramarines. 68pg b&w .. $5.99

oneshot **Warhammer: Titan** (various) In the heat of battle, apprentice commander Ervin Hekate must assume command and win a desperate battle against the forces of chaos. 288pg b&w $9.99

oneshot **Warhammer: The 13th Black Crusade** (various) Go deep into the Warhammer 40,000 universe and explore the true story behind one of the most desperate times in human history. 96pg $29.99

UK NEWSSTAND

DC Thomson

The Beano 3224-3227 (weekly; various) Classic kids humour anthology featuring Dennis the Menace, the Bash Street Kids, and all your favourites. £0.55

Beano Superstars 152 (various) One complete strip of the long-running humour anthology. 36pg £0.65

Classics from the Comics 98 (various) Anthology reprinting classic cartoon strips from DC Thomson's vintage kids' comics Beano and Dandy. 68pg b&w £1.20

Commando Action and Adventure Stories 3710-3717 (eight per month; digest; various) Featuring one self-contained comic strip per issue. Some new material. 68pg b&w £1.00

Fun-Size Beano 161-162 (fortnightly; various) Pocket-sized spin-off from the Beano featuring Dennis the Menace, and all the usual suspects. 68pg £0.60

Panini Comics

Action Man 100 (four-weekly; various) All-new soldier adventure yarns, plus quizzes and prizes based on the action figure. 28pg £1.50

Astonishing Spider-Man 113 (four-weekly; various; Marvel UK) Official UK outing for US Marvel comic adventures, with free posters and extras. 76pg £2.40

Avengers United 43 (various) Fast-paced action from Marvel's largest superhero team including the Hulk, Captain America, Iron Man, Hawkeye and the Scarlet Witch. £2.40

Doctor Who Magazine 347 (four-weekly; various) Contains celebrity interviews, feature articles and stories based on the soon-to-be rejuvenated doctor 52pg £3.30

Essential X-Men 116 (four-weekly; various; Marvel UK) Sassy selection of comicbook japery. The astonishing adventures are discreetly woven from one issue to the next, published in original American format 76pg £2.40

Powerpuff Girls Powerzine 28 (various) Comicstrips and fun, entertaining and humorous features presented by the three superheroines, Blossom, Bubbles and Buttercup. £1.75

Scooby Doo 15 (various) Regular vanquishing of baddies who, frankly would have got away with it if it weren't for those pesky kids. Also contains competitions, activities, quizzes and more! £1.99

Spectacular Spider-Man 99 (various) New comic strips and games. Plus a bunch of free posters and a competition 36pg £1.50

Transformers Armada 16 (various) Original UK comic strip, data files, cyber-puzzles, competitions and more. . £1.75

Ultimate Spider-Man 31 (various; Marvel UK) Tells a tale of Spider-Man, retold with modern-day computer enhanced artwork. £1.95

Ultimate X-Men 17 (various; Marvel UK) Reveals the incredible origins of Cyclops, Marvel Girl, Storm, Beast, Colossus and Iceman. £1.95

Wolverine & Gambit 101 (four-weekly, various, Marvel UK) Compiles US Marvel's own brand of Wolverine comic strips plus magazine-style feature articles on the tortured lupine one. 76pg £2.40

Rebellion

2000AD #1405-1409 (various) *Strontium Dog* Johnny Alpha must find a kidnapped king if he is to stop mutant persecution, while *Robo Hunter* Samantha Slade is in trouble. $3.75

Judge Dredd Megazine 223 (various) Judge Dredd finds out *How to Succeed in Bizness*, while there are more nightmares in a damaged brain in *Anderson: PSI Division*. 100pg $10.99

TPB or not TPB – that is the question!

Novel Graphics by Paul Gravett

Highlighting the latest and best in graphic novels

WHAT is the future of the standard American comicbook? Does the stapled pamphlet even have a future?

There's no denying that their sales are in steep decline, if not terminal freefall. Back in 1970, **Superman** could shift over half a million copies a month from newsstands and drugstores, while **Spider-Man** sold over 370,000. Those were real mass-market purchases, not the later blips hyped up by 'Number Ones', 'Death' issues, multiple covers or other gimmicks.

These days, this magazine's *Comics Economics* chart is sobering reading. Now that only a handful of titles manage to top 100,000 orders, bought mainly by collectors, it seems unlikely we'll ever see figures like those of the past again.

There may be trouble ahead, but the 32-page comicbook has been around for some 50 plus years now and it's a stubborn survivor. Publisher after publisher has tried to replace it with a bigger, pricier package, but with limited success. Remember Tower Comics' failed line of 68-page giants? Or DC's championing of 'Bigger and Better' 52-page issues, 100-page Spectaculars and the disastrous 44-pagers that led to the 1978 implosion?

About the only alternative that ever caught on was the more adult black and white magazine, pioneered by Harvey Kurtzman's **MAD**, which is now almost the last of its kind left. But now we've the trade paperback, or TPB.

When comicbooks began in the Thirties, they were 68 pages thick, 'all in color for a dime', a meaty read with the majority of stories complete each issue. What changed, especially once the number of story pages dropped, was the arrival of the serialised superhero soap opera, a formula devised by Stan Lee and company at Marvel that quickly spread.

I understand why buying these serials still appeals. Once you're hooked, there's the anticipation of reading the next instalment, the weekly ritual of the latest shipments, the relatively modest price for each thin, shiny issue with its striking cover. And who wants to wait till the whole story is eventually finished and compiled into a book before reading it?

Actually, I believe that there are a great many more people who do want to read complete stories, or at least story arcs with some sense of a conclusion. The broader public, most "civilians", don't have time to seek out back issues, come into a store on a weekly basis, wait months for a standing order – or get landed with a series that is left unfinished. They want the whole story and they want it now.

Hence the inexorable rise of the trade paperback, the term for a softcover compilation often of previously serialised comicbooks. Today it's almost inevitable that a miniseries, story arc or serial will get collected into a book, frequently almost as soon as it's completed, sometimes in hardback at first but a TPB will follow eventually.

Today it's almost inevitable that a miniseries, story arc or serial will get collected into a book...

That's because publishers can make big money selling them to comic stores, bookshops and libraries. Unlike dusty back issues, TPBs are perennial sellers.

True, you do lose something when you opt for the TPB. For example, certain collections, like those of two recently concluded black and white epics **Cerebus** or **Bone**, don't include their glossy colour covers from each issue. Nearly all TPBs omit editorials or letter columns too.

But there are bonuses: sketchbook pages, scripts, a celebrity introduction, that annoying extra unpublished story, or a new front cover. You also get a convenient, all-in-one package that looks good on your bookshelf. And when you do the maths, buying the collection can work out cheaper than buying the individual issues.

Another plus, to my mind, is that you don't get any adverts. Growing up, I never used to mind the ads in comics; in fact the allure of nuclear subs and sea monkeys and promos for the latest Saturday morning cartoons were part of the experience. These days I repeatedly find the adverts disrupt my reading pleasure.

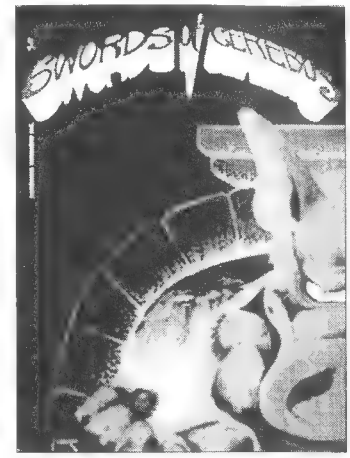
Mainstream comicbooks have pretty much always had some advertising in them, but over the last few years, as the slick styles and visual impact of comics and advertising seem to grow more and more alike, those commercial messages can become distracting and downright intrusive.

For instance, for me Kyle Baker's **Plastic Man** lost most of its manic flow because of the sheer number of ads, sometimes as often as every other page. It felt like trying to watch a classic Tex Avery or *Simpsons* cartoon with a loud commercial break between every joke. I'll wait for the TPB.

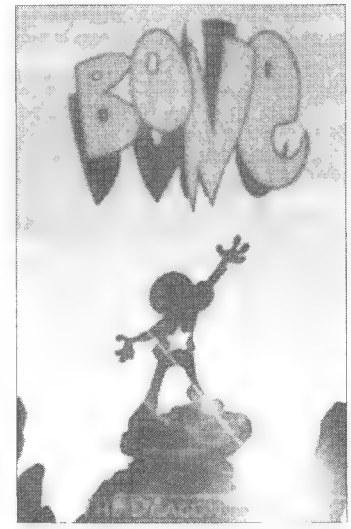
It's got the point that some of the ads are so visual and in-your-face, they seem part of the story. For example, one part of the Azzarello/Corben Hulk miniseries, **Banner**, opened with him in a devastated landscape. Then as you turned the page, a double-page spread for a computer game advert showed a huge slick image of a wasteland, which looked like it was part of the story. I'll confess: on occasions, such as Walt Simonson's **Orion** – uncollected so far I have taken to tearing out as many of the ads as I can, so I can read the story with fewer interruptions.

Fortunately some publishers, notably the ABC line, have the sensitivity to shunt all the ads down to the back of the comic. Much as I covet the book compilations of the ABC series, I'm sticking with the comicbooks because of this and because they seem so perfectly conceived as comicbooks.

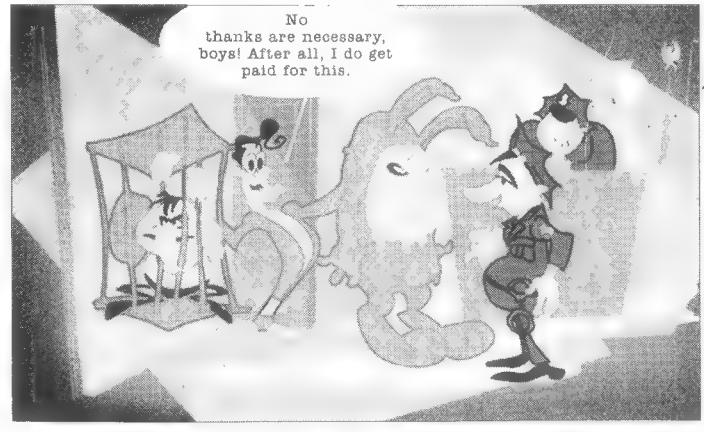
So TPB or not TPB? For the time being, the choice is ours. But, amid current sliding sales of comicbooks and the rise of graphic novels, more and more of which are being published directly in book form, I can't help wondering for how much longer?



Above: Dave Sim realised the potential of trade paperbacks back in 1981 with his ***Swords of Cerebus*** *reprints, long before the mainstream publishers caught on to such.*



Above: Jeff Smith's ***Bone*** *collections reach a far wider audience than his comics ever could.*



Above: Kyle Baker's revamp of ***Plastic Man*** *– too many ads spoil the book?*

www.KeyComics.com

Comment

CI, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (comicsinternational@yahoo.co.uk)

Comment is a forum to enable fans and professionals alike to express their personal points of view on aspects of the comics industry. As such, the following opinions do not necessarily reflect those of this publication, but space will be given in subsequent issues to well-reasoned opposing views. Submissions are edited only for grammar, clarity and brevity.

Gamma rave

Comment by Martin Gray and Terence Stuart via email

WHAT'S She-Hulk got that Wonder Woman hasn't? Dan Slott for a start.

Slott is the writer on She-Hulk's latest attempt at a successful on-going series (not that her previous, **Sensational She-Hulk**, at least under John Byrne, wasn't creatively successful) and four issues into the run this comic has surprised fandom with its witty infusion of old school Marvel continuity and courtroom dramatics.

But fear not, you don't need a bound copy of the Marvel Universe Encyclopaedia to grasp the subtle allusions to established Marvel history. Slott uses characters – such as The Mad Thinker's Awesome Android (now called Andy) – to ground She-Hulk's world with a sense of permanence that many of Marvel's current titles lack.

But he's not backward-looking – the characters are used in a variety of surprising new ways. Andy, for example, is the gofer at She-Hulk's legal firm, which specialises in superhero law, addressing such questions as 'Can the ghost of a murder victim give evidence against his supposed killer?' And 'What happens if Spidey sues J. Jonah Jameson for slander?'.

Slott is aided and abetted in this enterprise by Juan Bobillo, an Argentinian artist with credits on Marvel's X-titles (**X-Treme X-Men** and **Mekanix**) among others, who perfectly matches the script's light-hearted tone with an illustrative style that is playful and fresh in its depiction of some Marvel mainstays.

His Thing (**She-Hulk** #3) may have looked a little odd, but it was also a refreshing take on a visually stale character. For a visual simile, think Stephen DiStefano, who worked on DC's **'Mazing Man** and **Hero Hotline** in the late-Eighties and early-Nineties, the former of which is vastly underrated and deserving of reprinting in the trade paperback format (but that's a comment for another day). But what has all this got to do with Wonder Woman?

Well, Slott utilises the self-contained and tightly plotted format for his stories, eschewing the recent trend for narrative arcs that have barely enough meat on the bone to fill three issues, let alone six. Which is where Wonder Woman and her writer, Greg Rucka, comes in.

Rucka is undoubtedly a talented fellow. Indeed, he's just won a Harvey award for his work on DC's **Gotham Central**. He's a successful novelist, but he's currently using the fashionable "decompressed" approach on **Wonder Woman** and in doing that boring many of us to tears – he's been on the book almost a year and has failed to conclude a single story element introduced in his first issue.

A typical 22 pages will feature arch-enemy Circe wittering on in ancient Greek as she raises a gorgon from whatever passes for dead when you're a mythological being; a couple of pages of Wonder Woman wandering up and down corridors and politely asking for the office of would-be arch enemy Veronica Cale, who's sooooo blooming jealous of Diana she could just kill her – actually, no, she's so jealous of Diana she could discredit her. Oh, the drama. A recent issue was devoted entirely to Cale's back story, which amounted to: 'Wonder Woman has superpowers and is pretty but I had to sleep to the top and still can't twirl a magic lasso'.

It's slow stuff, the story of a Paradise Island ambassador who never goes looking for trouble – and worse, rarely finds it – although she hardly ever takes off her skimpy superhero outfit. The series is obviously intended for trade paperback collection, with stories divided into rambling arcs whose limits you'd never know without the old "one of three" or whatever tag.

What's more, Rucka has stated that he's not that interested on focusing on Diana's personality; he'd rather we get to know her via the reactions of others. So far we know that most people are awestruck by Diana, and one person is envious

The comic is the antithesis of **She-Hulk**, whose heroine comes across as a party girl but is shown to have reasons for acting the way she does. She's a top superhero who cares for her co-workers.

She's a great lawyer but doesn't always make the right decision. In short, where Diana is presented as perfection personified, Jennifer Walters is pretty rounded as a character. She's real.

Slott provides a meaty read, but one that's light-hearted at the same time. Any single issue has so far provided more entertainment than the entire run of **Wonder Woman** under Rucka (whose run does, admittedly, have its fans).

The sad thing is, however, that while sales of **She-Hulk** and **Wonder Woman** aren't that far apart – both are pretty low – the latter's title will survive regardless. She's the world's most recognisable female comics character, is worth a fortune in marketing and most likely has a movie on the way, and Warner Brothers/DC just isn't going to let her comic disappear from the shops.

She-Hulk, though, seems pretty much under the radar – Marvel has no reason to support her book unless someone 'Up There' likes her (as seems to be the case with Tom DeFalco's **Spider-Girl**). As best-kept secrets go, Shulkie is the Holy Grail of comics: Anastasia with a green tint.

She-Hulk is smashing, we tell you – try an issue today.

Not such a sterling job...

Comment by Richard Domar, Wolverhampton

EARLY in 2004 I did some business with an American and had to find the rate of exchange between the pound sterling and the US dollar. And I must admit it came as a bit of a surprise to learn it was around $1.80 to £1, as I was still planning on the easy-to-work-out $1.50 to £1. After a bit of research I discovered that this high rate had been around for many, many months.

And the rate is still around the $1.80 mark now. As I mentioned, easy maths at $1.50 meant that a $5.95 comic should cost me £4. But for some reason my standing order dealer has always charged £4.25, and had explained to me it was due to the higher freight costs. OK, no problem. I was still getting a discount so I let that go as one of those things.

However, doing the maths, that $6 book is now actually only £3.30. A rather big difference between £4.25 and £3.30, don't you think? Fortunately, there are only a few per month, so let's look at the more common $2.99 books that we buy at £2 a time.

My discount brings this in at £1.80, and I note there was recently an advertiser in **CI** quoting this same price. BUT, the real price of this $2.99 book is £1.65, a 35p difference.

You reading this are probably thinking I'm scraping the bottom of the barrel for a *Comment*-worthy piece because I'm making such a big fuss out of the dealer making an additional profit out of us at a mere 15p per item. If you think that then you obviously do not read that many titles per month.

If you're buying 10 titles a month and most of them are Ultimate ones, then you're probably paying around £1.35 to £1.55. But if you're ordering, say, 80 titles or more a month, the 15p rip off has mounted up to around a tenner, and over a year, you're losing over a ton. And I've not even included the $10 or $20 stuff that you might buy.

Do you see the point I'm trying to make? It's the whole snowball effect that begins with a small 'wrong' price that is being charged by standing order dealers on us punters. I've knocked dealers in a previous letter, but here I don't think it's their fault.

These dealers are simply taking advantage of the situation that has come about by the favourable exchange rate, and the fault lies with the distribution company, which has not passed on the rate of exchange to its customers. It has simply continued to charge what it did two years ago, and has pocketed the extra revenue.

Had the rate dropped to, say, $1.40, you can bet it would have passed on the increase. But being the one and only source for the stuff, it should respond accordingly to the rates of exchange. But it's chosen not to. Dealers will accept it, and the sad fact is they do not want to step on any toes by bringing it up and demanding price alteration.

I used to think that if you buy a product and pay for it in advance you should be paying little above cost price. Except in this case, in the UK we who order our comics in advance are actually paying more than the US cover price. The winner here is the distribution company, which is paying less and the dealers who buy wholesale at less than half price. The losers are the poor monthly punters who order in advance. The even bigger losers are those casual buyers who find the $2.99 books are being offered at £2.20 (or more) at marts or on lists.

In fact, for those of us with regular standing orders, it would probably work out cheaper to order from the States – even allowing for postage!

I began this as a gripe about current standing order prices, but I think it is also a condemnation of the nature of our hobby that is governed by a monopoly that doesn't care about the industry - only about making money.

Yet another reason for folk to quit buying comics or buy direct from the USA.

AREA 51 & COMICS INTERNATIONAL
PRESENT
COMIC EXPO
NOVEMBER 6-7, RAMADA HOTEL, BRISTOL
TOP WRITERS!
TOP ARTISTS!
TOP DEALERS!
TOP THAT!
(WATCH THIS SPACE)
Plus the return of the Eagle Awards. . .
the international industry leaders are back!
BONUS EVENT
PROCON 1
NOVEMBER 5, RAMADA HOTEL, BRISTOL
The first-ever event of its kind, PROCON 1 will precede Expo as a unique opportunity for writers and artists to participate in talks and workshops ranging from computer art to copyright.
EAGLE AWARDS 2004
Free entry (by ticket) to industry professionals for a day and night of panels and pints.
email: comicexpo@fsmail.net
For full details: www.komixworld.com

Rich Johnston's LYING IN THE GUTTER

The mild-mannered creator/writer of the Internet's original comics industry rumour and news column has outraged many a publisher and survived more than one change of website. But, despite several attempts to stop it, the Squiddy Award-winning gutterpress site continues to thrive, with over 20,000 hits a week at its home of www.comicbookresources.com

From his unique vantage point, Rich often scoops the industry newshounds with his stories. Here are the highlights from this month's Gutter...

Overload

Despite the prominence of creators on Marvel's **X-Men Reload** event, just how much say or sway do they have?

Joss Whedon already talked about the company's desire to move the X-Men back into more traditional costumes away from Grant Morrison's themes and how he worked towards that. Hell, Marvel seems to be doing its level best to walk away from Grant Morrison's plots by gutting them like a fish within a couple of issues of most of the books.

Alan Davis gives an account of the creation of the current **Uncanny X-Men** costumes and how most of them seemed to come down from above... and from the following quote, possibly from marketing!

"I gave Sage the hooded jacket to help me comply with the brief I have regarding the target audience." Next, Wolverine with floor scuffing flares? Please, oh please...

I Need Yu

I understand Andy Diggle and Leinil Yu have an upcoming project called **Hammerhead** from WildStorm Signature. I'm told it's "Loads of action, bullets and dead yakuza!"

Tony Bedard's...

Tony Bedard, considered a CrossGen "discovery" and lauded for his work on **Route 666**, **Negation War** and **Kiss Kiss Bang Bang** for the company, has been picked up by Avatar.

Avatar is expected to publish a new horror series by him, most likely to have the words "Tony Bedard's..." preceding it. It's planned for December.

Man Without Game

Encore Software, after spending two years developing a Daredevil console game, has had the plug pulled.

Shell Suit

A few weeks ago, we named Adi Granov as the artist working with Warren Ellis on **Iron Man** for Marvel.

In a recent email from his *Bad Signal* mailing list, Warren stated, "All of the three Marvel books are varying flavours of SF. Bendis and Millar helped me out by describing the UFF's stylised uniforms as 'impact suits' – pervert suits kind of tear the thin membrane of suspended disbelief for me. I mean, yeah, at heart they're superhero books and you can't lose sight of that.

"But treating them as SF is my way into them. The third book, the one Adi Granov is illustrating, is solidly built on an SF conceit – that, and getting to work with Adi, is why I took it. Adi's got star quality written all over him."

Movie Magic

Saw *The Mindscape of Alan Moore* this week, with a Q&A session with David Gibbons, David Lloyd, Oscar Zarate, Jose Villarubia and director DeZ Vylenz, led by ComICA programmer and man-at-the-crossroads, Paul

continued on next page...

Networks

Comics news and gossip on the Internet

Compiled by Chris Rice and his team of Netmites

Net sightings

Kate Worley RIP

Omaha The Cat Dancer *was one of the first American comics to be both a serious drama and incredibly sexually explicit, and had the advantage of being both well written and beautifully illustrated.*

Unfortunately, acrimony between the writer, Kate Worley, and the artist, Reed Waller, meant the story was never completed. However, Les Humanoides recently announced it would be collecting the series, as Worley & Waller had resolved their differences and would be finishing it. Sadly, after surviving a bout with cancer, Worley suffered a relapse and passed away early in June. Reed Waller posted the following on his website:

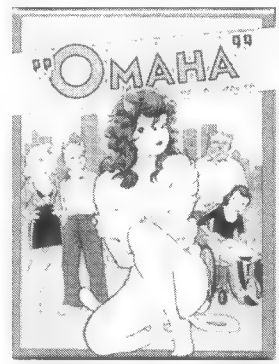
As you may or may not have already read, Kate Worley passed away on June 6, 2004. She is survived by her husband James Vance, son Jacob, and daughter Sarah. You can read or leave condolences, talk with other **Omaha** fans, and find out the answers to your questions at the *Cat-Dancing-With-Omaha* Yahoo group. I'm not ready to talk about this in depth.

So instead I will talk about **Omaha**. In spite of the difficulty of our separation many years ago, Kate and I gradually tried to make peace, and were finally talking comfortably, and by the time the inquiries started to come about whether **Omaha** could be finished, we were both excited at the prospect of picking up our unfinished business and doing more of the work that made us what we are.

At this moment I have two pages written by Kate only a few weeks ago, sitting on my drawing table in the midst of being inked.

If the **Omaha** project contract does in fact go through in spite of Kate's passing, the writing work will be concluded by James Vance, with my assistance, from the copious notes that Kate has left in preparation for the story's completion. Jim is not only Kate's spouse, he is also probably the only other writer working in comics who has a voice anything like Kate's.

It will not be easy for us to complete this highly personal work, after all the heartbreak and trouble associated with it over the years and now this sadness. But it's something that needs to be done now and I hope that Les Humanoids will give us an opportunity to do so.



Above: *The late Kate Worley's co-creation,* ***Omaha***.

Omaha *is a remarkable work, and* Networks *certainly hopes it will finally reach the audience it deserves.*

Ooops!

Observant readers will have noticed that last issue's story about Josh Middleton was not entirely correct, as was reported elsewhere in the issue. Rather than remaining at Marvel, the artist has jumped over to DC, although it appears likely that ***Sky Beneath Branches*** *will still be one of the projects he'll tackle.*

As to the question of his Marvel contract, which was assumed to still be in force, Middleton revealed all in an interview with Newsarama:

Technically, the way it worked it was only a year deal, but it was based on the amount of work produced. So the contract goes both ways. It had already been violated a long time ago when it was not possible for me to fulfil my work because I didn't have enough scripts. I was supposed to do a certain amount of issues a year, but if I sign a contract and six months later, I don't have a script to start, there's no way I can fulfil it. We operated on a trust relationship more than anything.

As he was pencilling, inking and colouring the series, he'd completed the terms of his contract by the end of issue 3, but Marvel stalled on a new contract, so Middleton decided to switch to DC. He reveals more in the interview, if you care to seek it out.

Not Wanted?

Networks *perennial Mark Millar recently conducted one of his regular Q&A sessions on the* Millarworld *site, revealing loads about his upcoming projects.*

Ignoring most of that, Networks *has decided to instead present a little snippet revealing his take on DC's apparent dislike of him, although following it is a wee list of characters he'd like to tackle:*

I'm always reasonably hesitant to explain this stuff because some arsehole always wanders on and says it's paranoia when they a) don't know the situation and b) usually don't work in the field and c) haven't ever fallen foul of DC. I was told when I left WildStorm that the door was wide open and they were generally very nice, bar one person who took it all very personally. DC NYC, however, put out a dictat to their editors not to speak to me and two editors contacted me from their home accounts to ask me not to email them because they could get into shit.

One guy who did keep

in touch, quite interestingly, was fired (Mike McAvennie). I've sent out group emails and had other DC employees again freak when they're publicly copied and I've been told by a friend in the DC hierarchy that I would never, ever work there as long as Paul and his inner cabal were in charge.

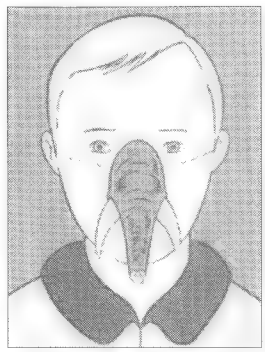
They tried to bury **Red Son** and the trade paperback only happened because Hibbsy (a good egg) and some other retailers embarrassed them into it. I have been told to my face that I will never work there and that's good enough for me.

Characters I'd like to write: Supes, Bats, JLA, Wonder Woman, Aquaman, GL, Flash, Cap, Hulk, X-Men, Ghost Rider, Blade, Defenders, Punisher, FF.

All the Marvel ones are being discussed at the moment, all waiting on the appropriate artists. Once you've had [Bryan] Hitchy, etc, you can only work with the A1 guys. You just get spoiled.

More Forlorn

One of the most interesting new talents on the indie scene is Paul Hornschemeier, who's ***Forlorn***



Above: *Paul Hornschemeier's* ***Return of the Elephant*** *art.*

Funnies*, originally published by Absence of Ink Press, has just been collected by Dark Horse in the* ***Mother, Come Home*** *graphic novel.*

He was interviewed on Newsarama *about his upcoming work, a sliver of which* Networks *presents for you, asking first about his next book,* ***Return of The Elephant****:*

...that will be coming out in July from AdHouse Books and I think that will surprise people because it's different from **Mother, Come Home** in every possible way.

Then towards the end of this year there will be a large collection of my old work that AdHouse Books will also be putting out... **A New Decade for Eli Guggenheim** (*the project that Hornschemeier intended to release before* ***Mother, Come Home***) will come out in late 2005 from Dark Horse and my series, **Forlorn Funnies**, will start being published by Fantagraphics in summer of 2005.

The full interview is at Newsarama*, and* Networks *encourages those of an indie sensibility to seek his work out.*

Chris Bunting's COMICS WEBWORLD

In what seems like no time at all since the release of the original film, the wall-crawler is back in **Spider-Man 2**. *Each of the evil Doc Ock's four tentacles point to this being a great movie, so here's a cyber-prescription of Spidey...*

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN INFO ***www.samruby.com***

Designed and delivered with panache and obviously more than a little patience on the part of creator, Eric Gillette, due to the staggering amount of background on offer. This includes news, a Spidey history lesson and terrific character profiles. While there are many exemplary Spidey fan sites out there, this is one of the most noteworthy. **9**

SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN ***www.paninicomics.co.uk***

Both the comic and movie incarnation of Peter Parker may star an all-American boy, but us Brits aren't to be outdone: the UK-produced **Spectacular Spider-Man** comic is all-original, lapped up by young readers, and boasts a formidable creative roster of Jon Haward, Simon Williams, Jason Quinn, John Royle, Ferg Handley, and Paul Marshall. Now celebrating 100 issues [see *Reviews* this issue], what does its future hold? Big-gun hero guststars a-plenty, and not one, but two, evil doctors. For you to get stuck in its web, this stylish site will allow you to subscribe, track down back issues, view fan art, or look at a nifty latest issue teaser. **7**

SPIDER-MAN CRAWL SPACE ***www.spidermancrawlspace.com***

Showcasing news, reviews, chat room, message board and ... er ... Spider-Man toilet paper. If the latter's not enough to convince you that the items featured in Weird Collectibles really are weird, maybe the Spidey guitar, shaving kit or Aunt May action figure will be! With so much to this site, it'll need bookmarking, as you'll want to come back again and again. **8**

SPIDER-MAN HYPE ***www.spidermanhype.com***

Gossip, rumours, as well as hard facts and breaking news on ***Spider-Man 2*** are to be found here. Then there's interviews, downloads, merchandise... I could go on. Suffice it to say, this is the site no fan of the big screen Spidey will want to miss. It's so dedicated that by the time this goes to press, its countdown timer will doubtlessly be set for the third Spider-Man instalment. **7**

SPIDER-MAN 2: OFFICIAL ***http://spiderman.sonypictures.com***

This listing wouldn't be complete without a look at the movie's official cyber-lot. Taking advantage of the intimacy that the net allows, it provides exclusive behind-the-scenes access in the form of cast and crew insights, photos, music and set footage. It is slow to load, but it's worth the wait. Not only achieving its aim of whetting the appetite, it supplies material of genuine worth and interest. **8**

Honourable mentions:
SPIDER-FAN [***www.spiderfan.org***], **SPIDER-MAN COLLECTOR** [***www.spidermancollector.com***] and **SPYDER-25** [***www.spyder-25.com***]

Rich Johnston's LYING IN THE GUTTER

continued from previous page...

Gravett. It does show what an icon Alan Moore has made for himself, as the man's finger jewellery endeavours to make him appear a new candidate for the Witchblade. There was little that was new for the viewer already immersed in all things Moore, his growing up, his decision to move into comics, then writing comics, then working for the USA and his decision to move into magic. It does make a big difference that he's saying all these things while his piercing eyes are burning into the back of your skull through all your fleshy bits however.

Some of the visual trickery portraying the comicbook panels was dizzyingly distracting – the French film the next day on Chris Ware's work had a more sedate and less annoying way of presenting scenes. But the realisation of V for Vendetta, Swamp Thing, Rorschach and Constantine were engaging in a low-budget kind of way. Splitting the film into chapters using the tarot felt glib, but was surprisingly successful, and the magical "shape" of the film was probably its strongest aspect, structured in a fine and decisive way, to reflect the changes in the message expressed by the narrative. Or, in less poncey language, "it felt right."

Naming Alan Moore "writer and shaman" was bang on the money and that was a strong theme of the film. Creating something from nothing, acting as a medium of expression, he sounded more like David Attenborough narrating the history of Life Energy. An authority figure from one who has abandoned authority.

If Moore ever decided to head up the Natural Law party, I think he'd get my vote. And they should run this film as a party political broadcast. *The Mindscape of Alan Moore* will be shown at a number of film festivals. If you'd like to arrange a showing, contact DeZ at *www.ShadowSnake.com.*

ComICA Spillage

I could attend hardly any ComICA events this year, due to extensive family commitments. However, for the nights I did attend, there was plenty of goss to be had.

David Lloyd is working on a new detective graphic novel called **The Kickback**, to be published as two 46-page colour albums. I saw a few pages he had on him, they looked lovely. He has sold the French rights and it is expected to be published later this year. English rights, however, are totally available for any interested publisher.

Dave Gibbons also pointed out that the French rights are available on **The Originals**. Oscar Zarate is working on a new graphic novel with Alan Moore, entitled **The Battle**.

With the publication of **Bannock, Beans and Black Tea** from Drawn & Quarterly, Seth has revealed his born name to be Gregory Gallant. The book retells his father's stories about his life growing up in some of the hardest times. And **McSweeney's Volume 13** is fantastic.

Witch Writer?

The new issue of **Witches** gives original editor Lysa Hawkins and original writer Bronwyn Taggart a "thanks" credit. Both no longer at Marvel, it may seem a generous tag to departed employees on Marvel's behalf.

However, I understand that far from this comic simply being based on an original concept by Taggart and edited by Lysa, the artist, Mike Deodato, drew the artwork directly from Bronwyn's full scripts. And while the dialogue has been rewritten, page sequence changed and additional pages drawn in upcoming issues, giving Bronwyn a "thanks" is a clear under-credit in this case.

And in a book that is now about women being controlled by men, for that to be the only credit given to the women creators seems awfully meta-textual to me.

Comics Economics

Top 100 US comicbook sales for March 2004

Superman/Batman up to #1

Rank	Prior	Title Issue Price & Estimated Orders	Publisher
1	(4)	**Superman/Batman #8** $2.95 (146,908)	DC Comics
2	(1)	**Avengers/JLA #4** $5.95 (143,565)	DC Comics
3	(1)	**New X-Men #154** $2.25 (117,253)	Marvel
4	(4)	**Superman/Batman #7** $2.95 (108,791)	DC Comics
5	(2)	**Ultimate Fantastic Four #4** $2.25 (106,873)	Marvel
6	(5)	**The Ultimates #13** $3.50 (101,329)	Marvel
7	(5)	**Ultimate X-Men #43** $2.25 (97,002)	Marvel
8	(6)	**Ultimate Spider-Man #54** $2.25 (93,025)	Marvel
9	(8)	**Ultimate Spider-Man #55** $2.25 (91,525)	Marvel
10	(9)	**Uncanny X-Men #441** $2.25 (86,431)	Marvel

Ultimate FF at #5

11	(11)	**Amazing Spider-Man #505** $2.25 (83,613)	Marvel
12	(10)	**Batman #625** $2.25 (83,371)	DC Comics
13	(30)	**Superman #203** $2.25 (83,096)	DC Comics
14	(18)	**JLA #94** $2.25 (76,134)	DC Comics
15	(14)	**JLA #95** $2.25 (69,898)	DC Comics
16	(12)	**Wolverine #12** $2.25 (69,815)	Marvel
17	(13)	**Teen Titans #9** $2.50 (69,056)	DC Comics
18	(26)	**Adventures of Superman #626** $2.25 (66,438)	DC Comics
19	(27)	**Action Comics #813** $2.25 (66,038)	DC Comics
20	(14)	**Supreme Power #8** $2.99 (64,429)	Marvel
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 60,000			
21	(N)	**Wolverine/Punisher #1** $2.99 (59,685)	Marvel
22	(21)	**Avengers #80** $2.25 (55,533)	Marvel
23	(22)	**Daredevil #58** $2.99 (54,400)	Marvel
24	(19)	**Spectacular Spider-Man #11** $2.25 (54,066)	Marvel
25	(24)	**Spectacular Spider-Man #12** $2.25 (53,549)	Marvel
26	(20)	**X-Treme X-Men #43** $2.99 (53,207)	Marvel
27	(27)	**X-Treme X-Men #44** $2.99 (52,515)	Marvel
28	(28)	**Conan #2** $2.99 (52,157)	Dark Horse
29	(31)	**Fantastic Four #511** $2.25 (50,089)	Marvel
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 50,000			
30	(N)	**Avengers/Thunderbolts #1** $2.99 (47,255)	Marvel
31	(N)	**Cable/Deadpool #1** $2.99 (47,130)	Marvel
32	(34)	**The Punisher #4** $2.99 (47,096)	Marvel
33	(33)	**Incredible Hulk #68** $2.25 (46,138)	Marvel
34	(34)	**Incredible Hulk #69** $2.25 (45,754)	Marvel
35	(23)	**Marvel Knights 4 #3** $2.99 (45,604)	Marvel
36	(29)	**The Pulse #2** $2.99 (45,479)	Marvel
37	(38)	**Outsiders #10** $2.50 (43,511)	DC Comics
38	(27)	**Transformers/GI Joe #6** $2.95(43,119)	DreamWave
39	(N)	**Alpha Flight #1** $2.99 (42,586)	Marvel
40	(35)	**JSA #59** $2.50 (42,553)	DC Comics
41	(41)	**Flash #208** $2.25 (42,386)	DC Comics
42	(28)	**Hulk: Gray #6** $3.50 (42,061)	Marvel
43	(N)	**Captain America & Falcon #1** $2.99 (41,519)	Marvel
44	(36)	**Transformers: Generation One Vol 3 #3** $2.95 (41,194)	DreamWave
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 40,000			
45	(42)	**Captain America #24** $2.99 (39,168)	Marvel
46	(40)	**Wanted #3** $2.99 (38,868)	Image
47	(43)	**Batman: Gotham Knights #51** $2.75 (37,742)	DC Comics
48	(47)	**Exiles #44** $2.99 (37,575)	Marvel
49	(22)	**Spider-Man Unlimited #2** $2.99 (37,550)	Marvel
50	(N)	**Marvel Age Spider-Man #1** $2.25 (36,700)	Marvel
51	(49)	**Spawn #133** $2.50 (35,774)	Image
52	(51)	**Superman: Birthright #8** $2.95 (35,524)	DC Comics
53	(53)	**Detective Comics #792** $2.75 (34,899)	DC Comics
54	(50)	**New Mutants #10** $2.99 (34,841)	Marvel
55	(52)	**Green Arrow #36** $2.50 (34,707)	DC Comics
56	(N)	**She Hulk #1** $2.99 (34,499)	Marvel
57	(N)	**Iron Fist #1** $2.99(34,207)	Marvel
58	(54)	**Emma Frost #9** $2.99 (33,890)	Marvel
59	(N)	**Swamp Thing #1** $2.95 (33,382)	DC Comics
60	(45)	**Transformers: War Within vol 2 #5** $2.95 (32,448)	DreamWave
61	(N)	**GI Joe: Reloaded #1** $2.95 (31,531)	Devil's Due
62	(58)	**Thor #75** $2.99 (31,531)	Marvel
63	(55)	**Planetary #19** $2.95 (31,506)	DC Comics
64	(N)	**GI Joe: Reborn** $4.95 (31,014)	Devil's Due
65	(62)	**Thor #76** $2.99 (30,806)	Marvel
66	(61)	**Birds of Prey #65** $2.50 (30,505)	DC Comics
67	(55)	**Mystique #12** $2.99 (30,489)	Marvel
68	(N)	**Devil May Cry #1** $3.95 (30,389)	DreamWave
69	(70)	**Thanos #8** $2.99 (30,189)	Marvel
70	(56)	**Thanos #7** $2.99 (30,180)	Marvel
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 30,000			
71	(57)	**GI Joe #28** $2.95(29,997)	Devil's Due
72	(77)	**Batgirl #50** $3.25 (29,897)	DC Comics
73	(62)	**Green Lantern #175** $3.50 (29,780)	DC Comics
74	(60)	**Iron Man #78** $2.99 (29,680)	Marvel
75	(N)	**Thor: Son of Asgard #1** $2.99 (29,588)	Marvel
76	(65)	**Nightwing #91** $2.25 (29,330)	DC Comics
77	(72)	**Robin #124** $2.25 (29,096)	DC Comics
78	(63)	**Wonder Woman #202** $2.25 (28,646)	DC Comics
79	(48)	**Hawkman #26** $2.50 (28,363)	DC Comics
80	(59)	**Venom #12** $2.99 (28,246)	Marvel
81	(69)	**Street Fighter #6** $2.95 (27,938)	Image
82	(68)	**DC: New Frontier #3** $6.95 (27,671)	DC Comics
83	(75)	**Thor: Son of Asgard #2** $2.99 (27,254)	Marvel
84	(66)	**Silver Surfer #7** $2.99 (26,962)	Marvel
85	(74)	**Y: The Last Man #20** $2.95 (26,454)	DC Comics
86	(71)	**Transformers: Energon #21**$2.95 (26,237)	DreamWave
87	(73)	**Weapon X #19** $2.99 (25,795)	Marvel
88	(76)	**Fables #23** $2.50 (25,211)	DC Comics
89	(71)	**Powers #37** $2.95 (25,028)	Image
90	(87)	**Weapon X #20** $2.99 (24,970)	Marvel
91	(78)	**Legion #31** $2.50 (24,870)	DC Comics
92	(83)	**Batman Legends o/t Dark Knight #177** $2.50 (24,494)	DC Comics
93	(79)	**Star Wars: Infinities – Return o/t Jedi #3** $2.99 (23,919)	Dark Horse
94	(82)	**Catwoman #29** $2.50 (23,811)	DC Comics
95	(81)	**X-Statix #20** $2.99 (23,677)	Marvel
96	(84)	**Superman: Secret Identity #3** $5.95 (23,352)	DC Comics
97	(79)	**Aquaman #16** $2.50 (22,810)	DC Comics
98	(93)	**Star Wars: Infinities – Return o/t Jedi #4** $2.99 (22,510)	Dark Horse
99	(86)	**Captain Marvel #21**$2.99 (22,235)	Marvel
100	(99)	**The Darkness #7** $2.99 (21,993)	Image

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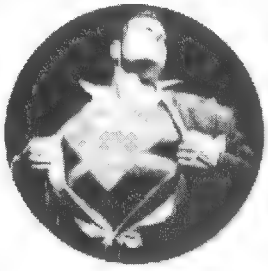

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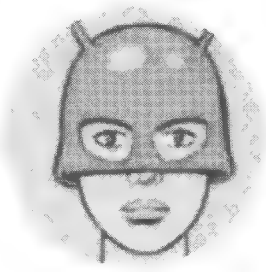

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Reviews

*Because few retailers allow titles to be read before purchase, **CI**'s comprehensive reviews section enables comics readers to keep abreast of the wide range of titles currently being published and draw readers' attention to comics they might otherwise ignore. Naturally, this section is of even greater benefit to readers who rely solely on mail order, as they can only judge the quality of a title after purchase.*

***Review codes:** Individual titles are judged against all similar comics past and present on a **1** to **10** basis, while a comparison is made against previous issues of the same title, ranging from <---> to <+++>. Hence, a quality comic may score an 8 against all others, but have slid from a previous issue's 9, denoted by <->. No change is marked <=>. We do not compare **Bone** with **X-Men**, but review each within their genre.*

***Review panel:** Chris E. Bunting (CEB), Carl Bateman (CB), Jon Edwards (JE), Kelvin Green (KG), Leigh Hunt (LH), David Knight (DK), Dominic McDonagh (DM), Scott Montgomery (SM), Keiron Mullens (KM), Ian Murphy (IM), Rob Nott (RN), Leonie O'Moore (LO), Tim Pilcher (TP), Andy Smith (AS), Terence Stewart (TS), Mat Thomas (MT), Alex Thompson (MAT)*

Dark Horse

Conan 4

by Busiek & Nord + Yeates

<-> The scripting is good, the painted art breathtaking but for some reason I am losing interest in this title. Maybe it's just because Dark Horse's own reprints of the classic Marvel run are competing with it for my time and money. Maybe I'm just getting fed up with the 'broken typewriter' font used for the narration. Either way, I may only give it a couple more issues. (LH) 6

Conan 5

by Busiek & Nord + Yeates

<+> This is quite dense reading, which is unusual in this day and age. Busiek is weaving his own way through Howard's classic tales and this exploration of the Hyperboreans is no exception. Nord's art is stunning as ever. (LH) 7

The Moth 2

by Martin & Rude + Martin; Rocket Comics

<=> Modern readers may discount this series, but older nostalgics hankering after 'real' art and 'honest' superheroics will love it. From the action-packed cover that entices by declaring that it actually refers to what happens inside, to Steve Rude's artwork – with its classic figurework, hard panelling, flat colours and zip-tone shading – and Gary Martin's slightly innocent characters and naïve tone, *The Moth* proves that 'retro' has a future. (MAT) 6

Super Manga Blast! 42

by various

<-> *Shadow Star* gets even more disturbing, as Mohiro Kitoh explores the shameful secrets of school bullying through his shape-changing alien sci-fi series. *Cannon God Exaxxion* is a real disappointment, even in the confines of boyish wish-fulfilment. With giant battling robots wielding phallic cannons, it makes little sense, not even allowing Kenichi Sonoda's art assistants to run riot on detailed machinery as found in his popular *Gunsmith Cats* strip. *Seraphic Feather* descends further into crudity wrapped up in the most generic manga sci-fi clichés, as any excuse is used to draw inflated breasts or thinly disguised crotch-shots. Dark Horse really should use SMB to highlight the best of manga, not to flog such substandard material. (MAT) 5

DC Comics

Action Comics 816

by Austen & Reis + Campos

<=> Action is what it says on the cover, and action is what you get. Supes dukes it out with Gog, and while Ivan Reis's art is a little scratchy, it is still head and shoulders above the other Super titles. (TS) 6

In the second part of the story, mysterious villain Gog (from Waid's Kingdom Come sequel) continues to pummel Superman and generally act evil without a word of explanation. And, gasp, it looks like he may have killed Superman. No, really! Yet again a second-rate writer poaches from a more talented scribe's completed story, and in this case manages to be far, far worse than the original (and The Kingdom was a bit of a turkey in the first place!). The art is competent but uninspired, with Superman looking pretty unconcerned about having been disembowelled with a kryptonite harpoon throughout. Pedestrian in the extreme. (MT) 3

The Authority: More Kev 1

by Ennis & Fabry; WildStorm

Garth Ennis's pub humour killer hero Kev (as opposed to the many others!) makes a triumphant return as the Authority gets a right good kicking off some aliens and needs someone else to save the Earth. We don't get to this bit until pretty much the end as most of the issue is spent in humorous bedroom situations, the pub, and talking tough about the SAS, but Ennis is a bit of a comedy master when it comes to that sort of thing, and I was laughing before you could say "shit in a pint of Guiness". And with outstanding artwork like Glenn Fabry's thrown in for good measure you really can't go wrong in checking out this excellent mini. A lot better than last year's one-shot. (MT) 9

Batman: Gotham Knights 52

by Lieberman & Barrionuevo + Portela

<=> The Joker confronts Hush over the fate of the Riddler, and the creative team does a fine job of portraying Joker as a credible crime boss. The writer and artists show they've got a handle on their characters, and there's no slack in the lean and deadpan script. Just one minor niggle then: since when did crooks stash their ill-gotten gains in Swedish bank accounts? (DK) 7

Batman: Gotham Knights 53

by Lieberman & Barrionuevo + Portela

<+> Hush comes to Star City to recruit muscle for his criminal campaign back in Gotham, but first has to save his new ally from Green Arrow. Oliver Queen isn't happy that Batman knew Hush was coming to town and didn't warn him. The inevitable fight between the two JLA members is handled well, and so is the segment that gruesomely shows off Hush's surgical skills. (DK) 8

Batman: Gotham Knights 54

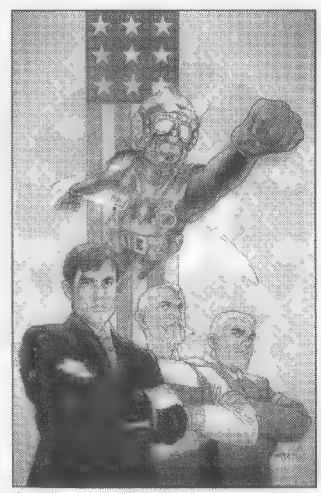
by Lieberman & Barrionuevo + Portela

<=> A. J. Lieberman rewrites the Joker's origin from The Killing Joke. In this version the Joker's pregnant wife is murdered when the chemical plant heist goes wrong. In a chapter that's mostly flashback, a shameless coincidence makes the Riddler a witness to the crime. Nevertheless, it's a cunningly woven plot that outshines last year's *Hush* storyline by Jeph Loeb, and deserves recognition for that. (DK) 8

<-> As Batman runs scared of Hush, Riddler tries to keep out of trouble by giving Joker the name of the man who killed his wife… as seen previously in The Killing Joke. Or was it? After tinkering with the leftovers of Loeb and Lee's Hush, Lieberman helps himself to a liberal helping of Moore's story, mashing it up to fit his needs. Obviously stories set in a universe become part of it, but again an inferior writers mess about with someone else's story, for lack of an original thought, and does so ham-fistedly. Bland art too, very expressionless. (MT) 2

Ex Machina 1

by Vaughan & Harris + Feister; WildStorm



The Great Machine, a man who can talk to and command machines, decides to stop playing vigilante and run for President. Tony Harris's pencils are competent but struggle to be expressive; he offers intriguing approaches to facial structure, but Tom Feister's inks trample over them. Writer Brian K. Vaughan works hard to try to imagine the circumstances in which a superhero might just become a political leader, and there's enough smarts here to suggest this could be a superhero *West Wing* – fast, smart and snappy. (IM) 7

Mitch Hundred used to use his mysterious powers over machinery to fight crime, but after realising how silly he was being, he decided to run for Mayor of NYC instead, a decision that hasn't gone over too well with the governor's office or his old mentor/father figure, Kremlin. And it's a lot better than I make it sound, honest! Vaughan deftly weaves all the aspects of our protagonist's life together, and the plain art is surprisingly dynamic in all the right places. This one looks like a keeper, check it out if you haven't already! (MT) 9

Vaughan teams up with Tony Harris to bring a modern twist to superheroics in an age of political apathy. Aside from the flights of fancy, Vaughan creates a believable world of alien powers and dirty-dealing politicians, aided in no small part by Harris's realistic and clean linework. (MAT) 8

Batman: Harley and Ivy 1

by Dini & Timm

This three-issue miniseries spins off from the "junior" Dark Knight title Batman Adventures, and tells the tale of Poison Ivy's attempt to steal the oil of a rare plant, which turns people into slaves. Thanks to ditzy Harley Quinn's "help", both of them immediately end up in Arkham Asylum. But the seductive Ms Ivy has an escape plan...There's some nice interplay between the two leads, and no doubt artist Bruce Timm had fun drawing the comedic shower scenes! (SM) 7

Batman: Harley and Ivy 2

by Dini & Timm

<+> Harley Quinn and Poison Ivy travel to the remote South American country of Costa Verde to find the fabled Zombie Root plant, and cause much chaos in the jungle. Paul Dini's script is smart and Bruce Timm's art is sexy. Batman eventually makes an appearance at the end, but this fun comic focuses firmly on the girls. And there's nothing wrong with that. (SM) 8

Birds of Prey 67

by Simone & Benes

<=> Black Canary raises a small army of female allies to help break out Oracle. The variety of character moments and little plot twists make this an enjoyable reward for sticking with this over-long arc. Gail Simone's scripting is at its best here, with nice asides and neat dialogue both in abundance. With artist Ed Benes apparently inking himself, there's more clarity and smoothness to the work, especially noticeable on the freer-flowing hair. (IM) 7

Birds of Prey 68

by Simone & Bennett + Jose

<=> Black Canary trains with Wonder Woman, and Huntress repays Josh for his help with a date. Gail Simone pens a quiet issue, in between arcs, and tries to open up the characters and let the reader inside their minds. She's more successful with Black Canary; for while we get insight into Huntress's evening we don't get much grasp on the woman inside the costume, why she does what she does. Jo Bennett's pencils are usually good, but fall to the cartoonish in weaker moments. Ruy Jose's inks are flexible enough to suggest strong potential. (IM) 6

Bite Club 3

by Chaykin + Tischman & Hahn; Vertigo

<=> Leto Del Toro's messed-up family is

causing him serious spiritual strife; but when you're a Catholic priest and your family are vampire mobsters, it's hardly surprising! Howard Chaykin and David Tischman continue to come up with clever spins on the vampire mythology by making analogies with Hispanic and mobster culture, but their knowingly detached narration falls into auto-pilot rather than engaging the reader with the characters. (MAT) 6

Caper 8

by Winick & Severin

<=> John Hawks' secret is exposed – and two killers are revealed. Judd Winick's second arc comes to a fairly satisfying close; this Hollywood murder rap has consistently entertained, and although the final twist feels unnecessary plot-wise, it gives an extra dimension to the portrayal of seedy, Hollywood depravity. John Severin's artwork, strengthened through Guy Major's colours, does well to bring out the varied emotional flavours of this powerful drama. (IM) 7

Challengers of the Unknown 1

by Chaykin

Howard Chaykin continues his comeback as a writer and artist, bringing his style of knowing social critique and roughly hemmed linework to bear on DC's fantastical adventurers. Opening with a bloody assassination attempt on the Prime Minister, Chaykin introduces five disparate characters plagued by troubling dreams, but what lies beyond them? An intriguing start, hampered slightly by clichés apparent in much of Chaykin's work. (MAT) 7

Fables 26

by Willingham & Buckingham + Leiloha; Vertigo

<-> It's all-out war as Fabletown defends itself against an army of wooden soldiers. Although well-plotted by Bill Willingham, I've found it hard to feel emotionally involved in this big battle – despite Willingham's careful efforts to tell the battle through individual stories. Mark Buckingham rarely communicates the trauma and horror of war so both creators disappoint following last issue's tense build-up. (IM) 6

Global Frequency 12

by Ellis & Ha + Lyon; WildStorm

<=> Global Frequency ends as it began with technical gibberish and universally unpleasant characters that you'd never choose to pass the time of day with. A lot of effort has gone into this and the previous 11 issues, but ultimately it only reflects Warren Ellis's obsessive love affair with pop science and his belief that rude, arrogant characters are still considered original. (RN) 5

<+> Gene Ha delivers more outstandingly rendered artwork, allowing Ellis to finally complete his emergency agency for the Noughties. The international team of experts is called in to avert another world disaster, as ancient Cold War space technology is accidentally activated. Ellis keeps up the pace, highlighting how well the concept transfers to TV; while Ha's finely depicted panels coupled with Art Lyon's painterly colours and digital enhancement reflect the script's high-concept sci-fi. (MAT) 8

Gotham Central 20

by Brubaker & Lark + Gaudiano

<-> Can Driver and McDonald dig out the link between Harvey Bullock, Mad Hatter and The Penguin to a school bombing? This is a detailed, compressed script, with barely room to catch breath between scenes. Ed Brubaker's tight script is in solid form, but the speeding pace means there's too much for Michael Lark to illustrate to have the space to do his best work. Despite the cramped quarters, it still looks gorgeous. (IM) 7

When a tragic old case is reopened for the GCPD, detectives Driver and Mack have to turn to disgraced Harvey Bullock for his old case background, but is setting the boozy Bullock loose on the case really a good idea? Brubaker continues spinning this excellent yarn, ably weaving Gotham City craziness with tough cop drama, and the superb lo-fi artwork only serves to make it an even more enjoyable experience. It's nice to see a mature comic in a superhero environment that doesn't need profanity or sex to make it work. Good effort those men! (MT) 8

Hellblazer 197

by Carey & Frusin; Vertigo

Fans of Jamie Delano's classic run on the title would really like recent issues of Hellblazer, particularly this one with its portrayal of a down and out, doubting Constantine who falls prey to a quasi-religious cult on the streets of London. John Constantine is always at his most interesting when he loses some of his atypical swagger and appears vulnerable. Mike Carey has this level of characterisation well in hand. (RN) 8

JLA 99

by Byrne & Claremont + Ordway

<=> John Byrne's arc ends without any great surprises. The villain is defeated, the JLA escapes unscathed. The Doom Patrol has been re-introduced and will go on to star in its own title. Overall the production on this title has been sloppy particularly in the colouring. For example, in a key scene a character's spurting blood is announced as green but coloured as red. But I am sufficiently intrigued by the DP to give it a try. Hopefully Byrne's pencils will receive better embellishment than they had here. (LH) 5

<-> Did you ever get the feeling you've been cheated? The past six episodes have been a teaser for the new Doom Patrol series and barely a JLA adventure at all, and it doesn't even finish properly. And (fire the colour blind editor) someone should have told the colourist that the colour of green blood is green, not red. JLA readers can just ignore the last two pages, but Doom Patrol fans aren't well served either. (DK) 3

<->The JLA and Doom Patrol join forces to take out Crucifer and his legions. This arc's end is marred by erroneously coloured blood in a key moment and a blond guy who appears and disappears for no apparent reason – and by a cliffhanger that leads into the new Doom Patrol series, forcing readers to buy another book to see how the tale ends. Byrne's pencils are always at least competent, but lack the kind of emotional edge that made his name and overall this run has felt incredibly laboured. (IM) 4

Plastic Man 7

by Morse

<-> Scott Morse allows Kyle Baker a breather by lending his talents to the revival of DC's elasticated hero for an interlude story. Plas acts as matchmaker to his hapless sidekick Woozy, but will he find a girl desperate enough? Morse manages to capture the exaggerated cartoony style Baker has established for the series, but his pastel colours slightly dull the bright and breezy tone of the book. (MAT) 7

Seaguy 2

by Morrison & Stewart; Vertigo

<+> Morrison's frivolity is infectious, and superbly complemented by Cameron Stewart's effective pencils. I challenge anyone not to giggle at the octopus shepherd, or choke back a sob by the final panel. (TS) 8

Stormwatch: Team Achilles 22

by Wright & Sauve + D'Anda; WildStorm

<+> Recent revelations by writer Micah Ian Wright about his fabricated military history have bought this series to an abrupt halt: a damn shame, as this issue showed much promise with the characters and new plot developments following the previous dragged-out storyline. Following their run-in with Machiavellian Templars, the team recuperates, aided by a grumpy former WWII superhero. Clement Sauve's quirky art style is balanced by Carlos D'Anda's harder, rough linework finishing off the issue with a cliffhanger. (MAT) 7

Identity Crisis 1

by Meltzer & Morales + Bair

This was a shock. I'd heard this was DC's big event of the year and that a long-standing character would die. Now being a Marvel zombie at heart, I picked this up thinking I'd just read it to see who died and leave it at that. Now, it's not so much the identity of the person who died but the craft with which it is told that has blown me away. I've never cared so much about a character I thought I didn't care for! I am now bursting to read the rest of this mini. Yes, it was really that good. (LH) 9

The killing of a sympathetic minor supporting character for the sake of heightened drama seemed gratuitous and exploitative to me at first, but in this case it may have been worth it for the quality of the writing and the genuine sense of unfolding mystery that ensues. This is not an uplifting feel-good comicbook. Instead, it's the serious side of DC's costumed crime fighters that comes to the fore. (DK) 7

The anticipated death is sign-posted from the very first panel, but Brad Meltzer draws the reader in with some very pleasing characterisation. Rags Morales has done better work, but still captures the requisite emotion. The Michael Turner cover is cack. (TS) 7

Superman 205

by Azzarello & Lee + Williams

<=> Issue 204: take 2. Superman carries on the same tiresome conversation with the priest, but this time, just to liven things up a tad, he eats a peach. Dull, witless and beyond comprehension. (TS) 3

<-> Superman continues his confession to the troubled Father Leone, and as in part one it spirals into boring double talk and vague hints to the actual story, without actually saying or revealing anything. Lee's art is suitably dynamic yet not jarringly flashy but the normally excellent and stylish Brian Azzarello doesn't bring much of either substance or style to the script. Whether this is a one-off disappointment or just a case of a character not inspiring his strengths as a writer remains to be seen. (MT) 4

Swamp Thing 4

by Diggle & Breccia; Vertigo

<=> Newly empowered as a flesh elemental, Tefe faces her belligerent 'father', the now-inhuman Swamp Thing. Meanwhile Constantine makes his way across Europe with the swamp god's human wife and a walking corpse in an attempt to halt the inevitable confrontation. Andy Diggle creates another fantastic script, bringing action, wit and great dialogue to a previously sombre title. Enrique Breccia also fashions some amazing pages, adding a gothic European touch while retaining the pulpy EC-style humour of the script. (MAT) 8

Teen Titans 12

by Johns & McKone + Alquiza

<+> McKone's art is sumptuous in this issue, some of the best work I've ever seen him do. He ably renders John's tale of family conflict and betrayal. Featuring a who's who of the classic Wolfman/Perez days, this would be a bit of a boring re-tread if not for the occasional twist out of leftfield such as the final page here, which is shocking. (LH) 7

Y – The Last Man 23

by Vaughan & Parlov + Marzan Jr; Vertigo

<++> Yorick faces down a member of the Arizona militia alone, while Dr Mann and Agent 355 face a firing squad. Goran Parlov's pencils have been consistently enjoyable throughout his guest stint, but here they surpass previous efforts, bringing tender emotion to well-written, awkward scenes. He offers more of the mood than detail, giving the pages a cinematic, expressionist feel, which is heightened by Zylonol's subdued colours and Jose Marzan Jr's liberating inks. Brain K. Vaughan closes this story in style, with strong running tension and genuine poignancy in the writing. (IM) 8

Image

Bad Ideas 1

by Chinsang & Mahfood + Crosland

Wayne Chinsang's script pokes fun at '90s iconic comics imagery and more in this oddball send-up of comics ideas that never should have seen the light of day. This book would like to think it's more clever than it is, but its targets are too obvious, nowadays, for it to really make me chuckle. Jim Mahfood and

Dave Crosland's art sometimes has a quirky, chaotic charm, but most of the time they struggle to stop pages looking cluttered. A good idea, but poorly executed. (IM) 5

Common Grounds 2

by Hickman & Jurgens + Van Sciver; Top Cow

<=> Joining writer Troy Hickman at Common Grounds, the hangout bringing donut-fresh perspective to the superhuman phenomenon, are artists Dan Jurgens and Ethan Van Sciver. Not letting up from last issue's great start, this title now ranks alongside The Darkness as Top Cow's top dog. (CEB) 8

Cursed 4

by Avery & Blevins + Molenaar; Top Cow

<=> Shan gives herself up to the conniving Victor so that he can use her as a gateway for the god, Osiris ... but who will benefit from this the most? Egyptian myth collides with the 21st century in this slick horror fantasy from a team of increasingly popular creators. (CEB) 7

Invincible 12

by Kirkman & Ottley + Crabtree

<=> Mark's father sees Mark's defence of his homeworld as a challenge to his parental authority and sets about educating his son. Although this issue is merely one long fight scene, it's handled very well, being brutal at times and poignant at others. The art perfectly captures the raging emotions at the heart of the fight, ending with some heartbreaking final pages. Excellent work. (KG) 8

<=> Following his father's amazing confession, Invincible tries to persuade Omniman to abandon his mission for the Viltrum empire. It's a fight scene that fills a whole comic, and it's a good one, even if it's an unequal combat. (DK) 7

<++> The inevitable father-son showdown. I have worried that Ryan Ottley's plaintive art struggles to convince in battle – that his blood and gore looks comic, not violent – but here that's all switched around; the blood and guts destruction of Mark is compellingly detailed and disturbingly illustrated, as the annihilation of our hero should be. Despite the cartoon style, a battering has rarely felt so painful or real. Robert Kirkman's script hits a home run. Perturbing, but superbly done. (IM) 8

The Walking Dead 7

by Kirkman & Adlard + Rathburn

<-> Charlie Adlard steps in as artist for a new arc of Robert Kirkman's apocalyptic zombie survival tale. Adlard's shadowy panels and expressive characters go some way to filling the shoes of the sorely missed Tony Moore, but lacks the gruesomely rough linework that set his art apart. Kirkman meanwhile continues to upset expectations as the survivors endeavour to press on, hampered by the encroaching winter and repressed anger. (MAT) 7

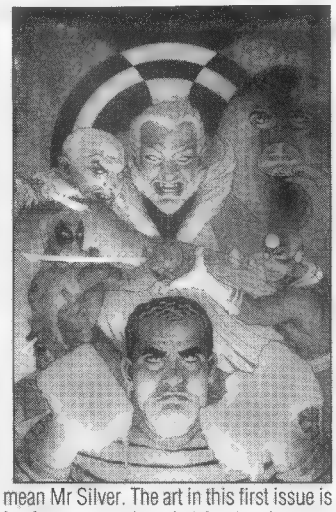
Witchblade/Wolverine 1

by Claremont & various

Wolverine and Sara Pezzini, amnesiac on their wedding day, find a briefcase full of cash in their possession. How does all this connect to the Odessa Mafia? Chris Claremont's plot might be MIA, but there's plenty of brashly coloured but vividly fetching Jim Lee-influenced art to distract. (IM) 5

Identity Disc 1

by Rodi & Higgins



Complete and utter derivative bilge. "The Usual Suspects" in the Marvel style, my arse. Totally, totally pointless. (CB) 0

Well, if this is Marvel's attempt to spoil DC's big event of the summer, they are going to fail miserably. This features six super villains trapped into doing a job by an aide to a mysterious, almost mythical underworld figure. It's a nice idea. Or at least it was when it was used the first time round in the Usual Suspects. Avoid. (LH) 3

Six super-villains are recruited for a job by a lady who represents a shadowy, if not mythical underworld figure, Tristram Silver. They are all coerced by being presented with a folder of evidence of some kind that would incriminate them, and they all reluctantly agree to work for Keyser Soze, I mean Mr Silver. The art in this first issue is excellent, detailed and expressive without being fussy or overdone, but the story is a two-second bore with no substance or urgency other than that which Rodi ripped off from *The Usual Suspects*. I feel like I've already watched, I mean read, issue 2. (MT) 5

Marvel

Amazing Spider-Man 508

by Straczynski & Romita Jr + Hanna

<-> Spidey confronts Ezekiel and one of them makes a sacrifice for the greater good. A decent conclusion to the story, but a very disappointing climax to the larger story arc that's been humming along since JMS took over. On the other hand, John Romita Jr produces his best work in a while. (KG) 7

<-> The Ezekiel storyline finally wraps in a less than satisfactory manner as he does another about-face to save Peter Parker at the last moment. A disappointing end to the arc but there appear to be good things ahead. (LH) 6

<=> Romita Jr completes a near decade-long stint as the main Spidey artist in the conclusion to the mystical origin of Ezekiel and Peter's powers. Pete faces being sacrificed to the spider god, but will Ezekiel's conscience get the better of him? Romita Jr's lithe characters, action sequences and emotive pathos show why he is duly respected as his father's successor. Unfortunately the rather abrupt close to the saga leaves J. Michael Straczynski's unsettling revelations unsatisfactorily resolved. (MAT) 7

Astonishing X-Men 2

by Whedon & Cassaday

<+> Joss Whedon's fresh new take on the X-Men continues in fine fashion. We see the team expertly take down a group of terrorists even if they have to rely on the return of Lockheed the dragon to dismiss Ord, its leader. The dialogue is sharp, especially in the scenes between the beautifully observed Kitty Pryde and Emma Frost. John Cassaday's art is deceptively simple and draws you from panel to panel without effort. (LH) 8

<=> Whedon is one of the very best writers working in TV and, on the evidence of the first two issues of his X-Men series, he understands the comicbook medium too. After the recent flash-bang approach to the title, Whedon's relaxed, back-to-basics approach is more than welcome. He seems to have done the impossible and made the X-Men human again. A great start. Cassaday's art is consistently excellent. (RN) 8

Avengers 83

by Austen & Kolins + Sotomayor

<+> This Invaders arc is a real fun romp so far. I can ignore Austen's pitiful Avengers characterisation (Hawkeye's affair with the Wasp is just ridiculous) as long as the Invaders, especially the Blazing Skull, continue to be so enjoyable. Scott Kolins' art suits the storyline well – particularly the war scenes featuring the enormous Atlantean craft. (LH) 8

Avengers 84

by Austen & Kolins + Sotomayor

<=> Austen wraps up his run on The Avengers and we all breathe a collective sigh of relief. Abysmal characterisation (witness the cringe-inducing page where Hawkeye is caught with the Wasps's underwear hanging out of his belt), ridiculous plots and hackneyed dialogue. On the other hand Kolins' art is again impressive depicting massive battles and the New Invaders continue to shine in this arc, which bodes well for their new book. (LH) 5

Avengers/Thunderbolts 4

by Busiek + Nicieza & Grummett + Erskine

<=> For some real Avengers characterisation, read this title rather than the Avengers. The interplay between the members of the two teams is a real joy to read and Tom Grummett's art is suited perfectly to this sort of colourful superheroics. Let's hope sales are good enough to restore the T-Bolts to their own title again. (LH) 8

Captain America 27

by Morales & Campbell; Marvel Knights

<-> After dealing with real world issues of terrorism and Guantanamo Bay, Robert Morales attempts mainstream superheroics as an alternate timeline infringes on Cap's own. Morales plays off his work on the black Captain America mini-series, but this is barely groundbreaking. With such a bizarre change of tone coupled with Eddie Campbell joining as artist, it's hardly surprising the book falls flat on its face. Campbell imitates Chris Bachalo's thick lined style, but superheroes are hardly his forte. (MAT) 5

Captain America and the Falcon 4

by Priest & Sears + Hunter

<-> Well, the first arc comes to a close and I can't say I'm overly bothered about continuing to buy this title. The blame isn't all down to Bart Sears' overblown art as Priest's storyline is nowhere near as interesting as he thinks it is. A shame. (LH) 5

Captain Marvel 23

by David & Quinn + Sotomayor

<=> In the far-flung future, molecularly-bonded duo Captain Marvel and Rick Jones discover that they're all but forgotten, no more than a fleeting footnote. Is this a deliberate metaphor by series writer Peter David on where this title may settle in two issues' time? With his upcoming return to the Hulk and X-Factor clans as evidence, he should know better than to worry. (CEB) 8

Daredevil 61

by Bendis & Maleev; Marvel Knights

<+> Oh, Brian Michael Bendis is doing that gorgeous thing again here where he mixes loads of cool old school Marvel characters (Madame Hydra, the Black Widow and more) with his post-modern take of super-heroics and as usual it's a wonderful concoction. Alex Maleev's art is stunning, particularly his take on the Widow. (LH) 8

<-> The Black Widow visits Daredevil – just as Nick Fury seems to be planning to trade her to the Bulgarians. In terms of plot, Bendis is slow to get this cooking, but his scripting remains sharp and Maleev's meticulously manipulated art always looks striking, and it all comes together, suggesting another memorable story arc. (IM) 6

<+> Bendis gives us the return of the Black Widow, just when I thought the comic really couldn't get any better. His treatment of her is spot on, as is his brief cameo of Madame Hydra and an undercover Captain America. It goes without saying that Daredevil is the best thing Bendis has ever written and right now he is the best writer Marvel has on its payroll. Magnificent. (RN) 9

<+> An embarrassing diplomatic incident for the Avengers leaves SHIELD agent Black Widow on the run and returning to the arms of ex-lover Matt Murdock, who is suffering the fallout of his failed marriage. Bendis shows his fondness for political intrigue and hints at his upcoming take on the superteam. Maleev depicts a super-sexy Alianovna Romanov, so it's bizarre that he draws Nick Fury with a receding chin! (MAT) 8

District X #2

by Hine & Yardis + Sicat; Marvel Knights

<-> Gangleader Kaufman investigates the supply of new drug 'toad-juice', while Bishop and Ortega meet a guy who gives birth to mutant rats, straight out of Alien. David Yardin does well with his depiction of tired, distressed and worn-out by life people, but inker Alejandro Sicat needs a lighter touch to illuminate the pencils adequately. David Hine's plotting is on the slow side, but his script glimmers with enough golden moments, including the final scene revelations about Detective Ortega's married life, to suggest this book will shine (IM) 7

Exiles 47

by Bedard & Sakakibara

<=> Tony Bedard continues his first story arc and so far it's reasonably entertaining. It's a visit to the regular Marvel Universe so there is of course a limit as to what dramatic changes will be left come story end. I'm not too sure about

the artwork as it can sometimes look a little cartoony and stilted and the version of the Thing is pretty appalling. (LH) 6

Exiles 48

by Bedard & Sakakibara

<+> A nice resolution to the arc with Beak leaving the Marvel Universe to join the Exiles while leaving Nocturne behind in his stead. Judging by the last panel though, she may have been better off with the Exiles! (LH) 7

Fantastic Four 513

by Waid & Wieringo + Kesel

<+> Spidey's pep talk to the Torch on how to deal with unpopularity takes a turn for the wetter as Hydro-Man attacks. Respecting hundreds of issues of history, while adding originality and entertainment, has become writer Mark Waid's stamp on this title, and should serve as a lesson to other creators. Adding Mike Wieringo results in the World's Greatest at its grandest. (CEB) 9

Iron Man 82

by Miller & Tan

<+> Can Iron Man stop Vitriol wrecking Iraq – and will Force help him, or fight him? John J. Miller's plot finally concludes, and as well as a dissatisfying and ephemeral close, it's also without action or tension. Philip Tan's art is excellent at carrying the grittiness of the location, although the visual arrangement of his widescreen shots is sometimes lacking. (IM) 6

Iron Man 83

by Miller & Lucas

<–> Iron Man wakes up with Titanium Man on a space station – can they divert a comet away from Earth? John J. Miller's self-contained story is a disappointingly ordinary tale, lacking in excitement, but Jorge Lucas's pencils and inks do well at illustrating this walking suit of armour, showing both it's bulk and strength, while the detailed space station backdrops provide a strong sense of situation and strangeness which mirrors Tony Stark's confusion. (IM) 4

Iron Man 84

by Miller & Lucas

<++> Well, it's been missing for a good while now but Marvel is starting to acknowledge its past. The whole Avengers Disassembled event seems based around old mistakes coming back to haunt them and here we find a return to Arsenal, the robot Tony Stark's father built and left under Avengers Mansion as seen in an old Avengers Annual. Enjoyable stuff with competent art from Jorge Lucas. (LH) 7

<+> Tony Stark searches out a forgotten 'Arsenal' robot in the catacombs below Avengers Mansion, followed by selected Avengers. Some of Lucas's faces feel inexpressive, and he can be frustratingly short on detail but he does draw a great Iron Man; the plot is thus far predictable but will hopefully shift great the closer we get to Avengers Disassembled, and a couple of great jokes keep it bubbling. (IM) 5

Mystique 14

by McKeever & Garcia + Fernandez

Mystique investigates a cosmetics company rumoured to be experimenting new products on mutant guinea pigs. Sean McKeever's free-flowing script is a relief, but this title's improvement is hampered by ugly inking, courtesy of Raul Fernandez's unfeeling marks, which makes it hard to see how good Manual Garcia's pencils are, underneath such bruising inks. (IM) 5

She-Hulk 4

by Slott & Bobillo + Sosa

<=> Another delightful romp though the playground that is the Marvel Universe by Dan Slott. This issue takes on the whole Spider-Man vs J Jonah Jameson conflict and looks at it from a legal view. Naturally the Scorpion takes an interest in the case. Fresh and fun. (LH) 7

<+> Another pleasing issue as Slott effortlessly infuses Marvel continuity with witty courtroom drama. Juan Bobillo captures the tone of this series with panache, which is more than can be said for the technically skilled, but samey sludgy covers. (TS) 7

<+> A co-worker who has a crush on She-Hulk's non-powered alter-ego comes up with a way for Spider-Man to sue the Daily Bugle for libel, and wouldn't you know it but foes with grudges use the opportunity to attack. And it's neither hokey nor obvious! Newcomer Slott has a great sense of both pacing and humour and, after four issues, still hasn't resorted to spandex slugfests as story, which is still an absolute shock when you consider the protagonist! The Euro-flavoured artwork fits the mood perfectly, dynamic and relaxed as appropriate, and never gaudy, this is definitely among the top five Marvel comics at the moment, a definite sleeper hit! (MT) 8

New X-Men Academy X 1

by DeFilippis + Weir & Green + Ketcham

Norikio's gauntlet malfunctions, leaving the gang in trouble later in the Danger Room. Nunzio DeFilippis and Christina Weir's script may be light but it's effective in re-introducing the characters to new readers. Randy Green's pencils are a significant improvement on the blunt hammer-headed pencils that ended the last volume, hopefully there'll be a more consistent art-team this time around. (IM) 6

New X-Men Academy X 2

by DeFilippis + Weir & Green + Ketcham

<-> The new squads are announced, and the rivalry between Josh and Julian grows. The colourists can't decide whether the new costumes should be pink or grey, which suggests a lack of attention. The writing is more concerned with setting up the group dynamics than it is with establishing plot, and so the book currently lacks in excitement; but hopefully instead they are laying firm foundations for this school-based, villain-less book. I'm not convinced yet, though (IM) 5

NYX 4

by Quesada & Middleton

<+> Kiden's time of living rough, punctured by visitations from the ghost of her father; and X-23 offers an explanation. Joe Quesada's plot isn't as preachy or moralistic as I'd feared, and enjoyably plays with the confusion, uncertainty and disbelief that Kiden experiences. Josh Middelton fails to ignite the splash pages but invests many panels with dynamic, emotive art that admirably pulls the reader in, a feeling reinforced by intelligent colours courtesy of Middleton himself and Beaulieu (IM) 7

<=> Kiden relates her missing year on the streets to her still cynical ex-teacher; the mysterious X-23 opens up a little and an amiable young girl faces abuse at home. The news regarding Middleton's abrupt departure from the title may have overshadowed things, but his final work shows just why he has become such a hot new property. Quesada's script is another impressive outing, but the slow publishing rate of the series doesn't lend itself well to the gradually unfolding plotlines. (MAT) 8

Supreme Power 10

by Straczynski & Frank + Sibal; MAX Comics

<+> Things hot up in more ways than one as Princess Power comes out of hiding to join forces with Hyperion. This is far less hokey than it sounds. The Princess's full introduction is genuinely creepy. She will be an interesting character to watch. Gary Frank draws beautiful women as always, here he shows he can also draw extremely ugly ones. Overall, the tension builds nicely. (LH) 8

<–> Princess Zarda emerges from her crypt, completely naked (throughout the book); but she thoughtfully takes a sheet with her, not to cover herself but to hide otherwise naked Hyperion's modesty from suddenly squeamish or innocent observers. This mighty woman seems creepily subservient, and when tied to Aqualass's nudity and neediness, the women in this book appear badly developed. There's virtually no plot, making the exploitative feel of this issue feel seedier: a particularly annoying development on an otherwise exemplary run. (IM) 5

<–> A certain Greek goddess is revived and comes to the aid of the injured Hyperion, while Dr Spectrum encounters a naïve merwoman. As usual, this is all wonderfully rendered by Frank, who takes particular care with the naked Zarda, but even MAX Comics doesn't allow him to be too revealing. J. Michael Straczynski slows down even further with this issue, drawing two scenes out over 22 pages. (MAT) 7

Runaways 16

by Vaughan & Alphona + Yeung + Strain

<+> Brian K. Vaughan is one of Marvel's most underrated writers. With this title he has created a wonderful group of characters that has gone through plot twist after plot twist. Another magnificent one here as the mole is revealed and no, I couldn't have been more wrong in my guesses. Sadly, this title is ending soon. It doesn't deserve that. (LH) 8

The Runaways take on their parents in brutal combat – until, finally, the hidden traitor stands revealed. Vaughan does a great job of making teenage dialogue seem genuine without having them talk huffily or act dumb a la the new New Mutants, and writes readable fight scenes. Adrian Alphona's pencils hit all the right emotional notes, beautifully collaborating with fetching inker Craig Yeung, especially on the 'breath of life' scenes. I'm going to miss this book. (IM) 7

Secret War 2

by Bendis & Dell'Otto

<=> The intrigue continues. Our gang of heroes goes off on Fury's mission to Latveria on a flight where Wolverine takes too much advantage of the free in-flight drinks. As the action switches between the mission which happened a year ago and the present day, it's all designed to be confusing. Hopefully, we'll start getting some answers soon as even the stunning painting of Gabrielle Dell'Otto will get dull eventually. (LH) 7

<=> Flashbacks show how, one year ago, Nick Fury recruited a team of heroes to overthrow the Latverian government. Now Captain America's angry, blaming that adventure for Luke Cage's coma. Brian Michael Bendis's plot may be struggling to come to life, save for his trademark snappy dialogue, but Dell'otto's painted art is divine. He beautifully captures character and gives the book the edge that Bendis forgot; although quite why Black Widow is wearing high heels with her 'blending in' but vacuum-packed burkha is beyond me. (IM) 8

Spectacular Spider-Man 15

by Jenkins & Ryan

<+> Spider-Man gets in on the Avengers Disassembled event as he teams with Captain America to bring down a massively powerful mystery woman. It's someone from Cap's past although I'm not sure who, maybe the Elfqueen from Avengers circa #212. Ryan's art is growing on me and the final page is delicious and disturbing at the same time. (LH) 7

Spider-Man 3

by Millar & Dodson + Dodson; Marvel Knights

<=> The Owl sends Spider-Man after

Electro, claiming that he and The Vulture kidnapped Aunt May. Mark Millar writes that Electro has a new costume, but the artists can't portray it the same way in consecutive panels. The bruising fight scenes, laced with enjoyably dodgy dialogue, are memorable, but as pretty as Terry Dodson's pencil art can be, Rachel Dodson's inking stomps right over it with thick, inflexible lines and Ian Hanning colours the entire book too darkly, making it a horrible read visually. (IM) 5

Thor 79

by Jurgens & Eaton + Geraci

<-> And so it ends, not with a bang but a whimper. This is not only the conclusion to the *Gods and Men* arc but to the entire Jurgens run. I understand that Jurgens was taken off the book at very short notice and this explains why the ending seems so rushed. Scot Eaton handles the art with aplomb but overall this is a real let-down. (LH) 5

Thor 80

by Oeming + Berman & DiVito + Villari

<=> With barely a mention of the epic storyline just completed, we are launched into another one. Thing is, the issue starts as if it is describing an old tale but clumsy scripting means it's hard to judge when this is really set until the final page when it starts to tie in to the current Avengers Disassembled crossover. Thankfully Andrea DiVito's stunning art makes up for the awful storytelling. (LH) 5

Loki finds the magical forge that bore Thor's hammer – and uses it to make duplicates for his allies, who rampage through Asgard. New writer Michael Van Oeming and Daniel Berman quickly show enthusiasm for Norse mythology, and although the pace feels rushed, that's a pleasant change. DiVito offers up some imposing art, but it's again restricted by having to squeeze so much onto the pages. Promising, nonetheless. (IM) 7

Thor 81

by Oeming + Berman & DiVito + Villari

<=> Haters of Jurgens' long and epic storyline will love this. Ragnarok happens, without warning, in one issue! Most of Thor's supporting cast have been killed off and Asgard is destroyed. This sort of thing belongs in a Thor: The End special because if this isn't retconned/reset in the next five years, I'll eat my Thor collection. Andrea DiVito's art is wasted on this rubbish. (LH) 4

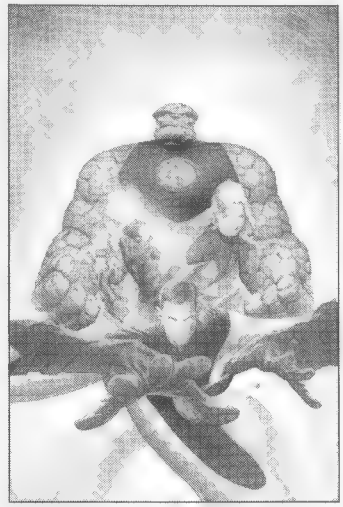
<=> Thor, Iron Man and Captain America fight a long, tough battle against Loki, Fenris, Ulik and Hymer. Writers Michael Avon Oeming and Daniel Berman do brilliantly to make the fight feel so arduous, aided by Laura Villari's careful use of colour to emphasise and intensify, and Andrea Divito's dignified pencils. A book enjoying a renaissance. (IM) 7

Ultimate Fantastic Four 6

by Millar + Bendis & Kubert + Dell

<-> Can our heroes escape from Molevic's grasp? Andy Kubert's pencils fail to match the widescreen script, leaving the fight scene visuals underwhelming and without a sense of pressure or danger. Brian Michael Bendis and Mark Millar have applied a funky script to an ordinary plot, but this book just lacks the exciting jazz I got from some other Ultimate books. (IM) 6

<-> The superpowered youngsters face Dr Molekevic in the catacombs below New York. Driven furious by their incessant babbling, he's obviously never read a Bendis comic before! Rather than a strikingly modern update of Marvel's greatest, the initial arc fizzles out in a modest and unsurprising rehash of Lee and Kirby's first issue. Kubert can't be knocked, working his guts out bringing interest to the page; instead the blame falls on star writers Bendis and Millar for their rather pedestrian script. (MAT) 7



Ultimate Fantastic Four 7

by Ellis & Immonen + von Grawbadger

<++> Bio-technologist Sue Storm tries to understand what's happened to Reed's body. Warren Ellis slips into Bendis and Millar's shoes so snugly it's like he was meant to write this book. There's a smoothness to this issue that felt lacking before, but also an affection for the characters, and a welcome depiction of a self-assured and respecting Sue. Stuart Immonen's pencils are strikingly lovely, beautifully rendering Reed's anger and loneliness while Wade von Grawbadger's inks emphasise and magnify rather than trample. Previously this book was okay, but now it's inspired. (IM) 8

<=> Ellis makes a surprise return to mainstream superheroics and Marvel, once again scripting an alternate Dr Doom as the four young heroes search for their lost classmate. Ellis brings the required breath of fresh air to the revamped title: fashioning a genuinely fearsome arch-nemesis and a disturbing explanation of Reed's affliction. Immonen's smooth artwork seems an odd choice after Adam Kubert's dynamically detailed style, and the light colouring puts it even more out of place with the script's dark elements. (MAT) 7

Ultimate X-Men 46

by Vaughan & Peterson

<+> Nightcrawler and Angel reach out to Jean-Paul Beaubier, while Storm goes a little crazy, with writer Brian K Vaughan offering enjoyably different perspectives on Xavier's through Angel, Beaubier and Emma Frost. New artist Brandon Peterson makes a strong impact with menacing alley scenes and a shiny metallic Colossus that looks magnificent; but his faces often seem contorted or alien. Justin Ponsor's colours are beautiful and help to overcome any significant artistic flaws. (IM) 7

Ultimate X-Men 47

by Vaughan & Peterson

<+> Jean Grey communicates with the hospitalised Jean Paul and the team makes plans to hunt down serial mutant killer Sinister. Brian K Vaughan's well-paced script quickly runs around the team relationships, giving each member a couple of scenes in which to sparkle, but still finds time to give the Sinister plot a menacing air. Brandon Peterson's faces do sometimes look contorted, but there's a passion in his work that overcomes that and which convinces me of his talent. (IM) 8

Uncanny X-Men 445

by Claremont & Davis + Farmer

<+> If you were reading Marvel UK about 20 years ago during the heyday of Moore and Davis, you may recall a creature called the Fury. An almost unstoppable killer of super-humans, he took on Captain Britain and many allies and was only just defeated. Well, he's back and his co-creator Alan Davis is relishing depicting this monster again. The Fury seems to have taken out Cannonball and Bishop this issue already. Let's hope it does do some permanent damage to the mutants so that our memory of his reputation isn't spoiled. (LH) 9

<++> Rachel Grey, Bishop and Cannonball visit Braddock Manor – and walk into a nasty, exciting fight with The Fury. Chris Claremont's scripting feels so much more smooth and free, and it's a joy to see Davis draw Mastermind's caverns. I've always been undecided about Davis's work, but many of these pages are the finest work of his I've seen, with Mark Farmer's inks equally bold. A strong improvement on last issue. (IM) 8

Witches 1

by Walsh & Deodata

Deodata's characteristic hooter fixated artwork leaves Doctor Strange as the only lead character who looks capable of standing up unaided, and the script links together cliches with hamfisted ineptitude. (DM) 3

Witches 2

by Walsh & Deodata

<+> A slight improvement on issue 1: which is to say it comes across like a bad episode of Buffy. You suspect Brian Walsh thinks this is something to aspire to. (DM) 3

X-Men 158

by Austen & Larroca + Miki

<-> Havok's crew fights the Chinese 'Eight Immortals', for possession of Xorn's unconscious body. Salvadore Larroca's pencils are much improved in recent months, but they do not combine well with Danny Miki's inks, which too often suffocate grace from the artwork. Many of the backgrounds are garishly coloured by UDON, removing contrast and balance. The fight's hard to follow as much for the team's lack of leadership as for the script itself, although Sammy and Jay's quiet interlude shows Chuck Austen can actually write. (IM) 5

X-Statix 23

by Milligan & Allred + Craine

<-> The X-Statix vs the Avengers battle limps along, getting duller and more tired by the issue. Hawkeye battles Vivisector and <yawn> Ant Man battles Venus Dee Milo. One round to each team in the traditional way. Only a few issues left of this title, might as well stick it out to the end. (LH) 4

<+> Hawkeye and Vivisector find African politics more complex than they bargained for in a political but still heroic and poignant tale, while Ant-Man and Venus endure a surreal and funny Antartica encounter. Milligan really hits the spot here, mixing up comedy, poignancy and politics in one fine swoop; and Allred's pencils are perfect for this visually diverse issue. This book is going out on a wonderful high-note. (IM) 9

US Indies

Bear 5

by Smart; Slave Labor

<=> Satire, horror and violence are all in evidence in another excellent issue. My particular favourite story this issue is a hilarious take on zombie movies starring the regular cast. Great stuff. (KG) 8

Courtney Crumrin in the Twilight Kingdom 4

by Naifeh; Oni Press

<=> Constance meets the Twilight King, who explains the sad plight of his realm, and hands her both a rare opportunity and a weighty dilemma. Meanwhile, Marshal Templeton, who has followed Courtney and her friends, plans to rescue them from the Twilight Kingdom by unsubtle means. Anyone who loves magic and fairy tale fantasy really shouldn't be missing this. (DK) 9

Gloom Cookie 20

by Valentino & Sparx; Slave Labor

<-> Gloom Cookie is on familiar ground with the mix of melodrama and supernatural mystery seen in the current story arc. But even so, you have to pay attention or it gets very confusing. Sebastian is persuaded that the latest reality shift was all in his mind, and that Lex is still dead. But who can he really trust? The truth is more complicated than most readers can have guessed. (DK) 6

Joe R. Lansdale's By Bizarre Hands 2

by Lansdale + Rossi; Avatar

<++> Margie and Alex are growing old together in a shack down south, and although life on the breadline is plenty scary, it's one dying before the other that scares them the most. When a figure in black takes Margie's soul right in front of him, Alex shocks himself by how far he's willing to go not to be left behind. Although this would seem a bog-standard romantic tale, Joe R. Lansdale's story wrings plenty of warmth from the couple's brief interaction; and the doubled twist at the end keeps the story alive. Rossi's dark black and white art is perfectly suited to a stormy night, and he does an excellent adaptation of the short story. Looking forward to the next issue. (MT) 8

La Perdida 4

by Abel; Fantagraphics

<+> The fallout from the kidnapping of Carla's rich American ex-boyfriend causes suspicion to fall on her newfound Mexican friends, but is she too caught up to realise the danger she's in? Inspired by her own experiences of living south of the border, Jessica Abel continues to weave the story of an unworldly young woman exploring a new

culture. Her assuredly simple brush stokes capture the messy lives of her characters effectively, but the main protagonist borders on the annoyingly unsympathetic. (MAT) 8

Micronauts 3

by Jolley & Broderick + Pepoy; Devil's Due

<-> The Micronauts travel to Acroyear's home world to follow a lead that may reveal the whereabouts of Baron Karza. Pat Broderick and Andrew Pepoy do a fine job of the art as usual, but there's not a great deal of action and the story makes slow progress. Acroyear's mythology is developed a little, which may pacify die-hard fans. (DK) 5

Ninja High School 114

by Bair & Bevard; Antarctic Press

<=> Creative team Katie Bair and Robby Bevard have a habit of keeping regular NHS readers on their toes by continuously shifting direction, demonstrated this issue as an immortal scholar attempts to steal the life essences of the girls of Wunan High. The cast of characters, just like the readers, can only hold on and enjoy the ride! (CEB) 7

Quagmire USA 1

by Dunn & Guru eFX; Antarctic Press

Young ninja-in-training Bento goes to live in the USA, but no sooner has he arrived than his sensei readies him for a dangerous mission. American manga maestro and fan-favourite Ben Dunn wastes no time setting the scene, incorporating his trademark wackiness in the form of aliens, cape-wearing heroes, martial-artists and fairies. (CEB) 7

Queen & Country 25

by Rucka & Rolston; Oni Press

< = > A standalone story that delves into the background of Tara Chase as we meet her 'Absolutely Fabulous' clone of a mother whose life revolves around expensive ski resorts and screwing young upwardly mobile beautiful people from the international jet set. A refreshing change of pace that adds a lot to Tara's motivation and abrasive character. Shame about the amateurish art. (RN) 6

Ruule Vol 2: Kiss and Tell 1

by Amano & Rousseau; Beckett

Sam beats on gangsters, then gets caught with his trousers down by his mom, while Rocco realises that having Sam squirrel his daughter offers him some unexpected protection. Jeff Amano's dialogue is rarely sharp enough to make this feel fresh, but the plot has its moments and may yet produce exciting flavours. Craig Rousseau, whose style links Allred and Oeming, has charm in his work that prevents this mob book from becoming too dark; but overall the enterprise fails to blaze. (IM) 6

Skidmarks: The Complete Bic Cycle

by Ilya; Active Images; $12.95

Ex-pat Richard Starkings' Active Images is bringing some of the best indie Brits to a much-deserved wider US audience, including Ilya's very first project, now collected for the first time. Bic is a bike-obsessed lad who – when given the opportunity to steal from his local shop – is torn between returning the cash or buying his dream machine. This slice-of-life tale of a boy and his bike, and his battles with his conscience, all ring painfully true. Ilya's razor-sharp storytelling is masterfully witty and it's a joy to watch him develop as a storyteller and artist through the book. But most importantly, Skidmarks is packed to the gills with something woefully lacking in American mainstream comics these days: heart and soul. (TP) 9

Street Angel 2

by Rugg + Maruca; Slave Labor

<=> When the Aztecs of 500 years ago sacrifice 100 (almost) virgins to be saved from the conquistadors, the evil Spaniards are sent forward in time to crash their ships into Street Angel's Wilkesborough, where they fight lots of ninjas and meet a time-travelling Australian/Irish spaceman before Street Angel manages to sort them all out and deck the lusty Cortez! Great story, great jokes and great unflashy black and white art, who could ask for more from a comicbook? (MT) 8

Troglodytes

by Ruijters; Top Shelf/Oog & Blik

A simultaneous release by the Atlantan and Amsterdam publishers brings Marcel Ruijters' vulgar cave dwelling monsters to light. With a rigid society made up of dim-witted workers, slobbish, self-interested leaders and sexually charged yet brutally repressed females, Ruijters tells short moral stories of the crude little creatures' daily lives. Without the use of speech balloons and utilising only three colours, Ruijters brings acute social allegory in the form of a Fungus the Bogieman for adults. (MAT) 8

Van Helsing's Night Off

by Mahler; Top Shelf Productions; $12.95

When some of these strips by Nicolas Mahler have already been published by L'Association, it's a guaranteed seal of quality. Here Mahler uses the horror genre, and the trick of deceptively simple visuals, to create humour. The story *The Wolf Ma'am II* in particular had me laughing out loud. Another gem given much-deserved exposure by Top Shelf. (CEB) 7

The Victorian 22

by Houghton + Wein & St Aubin; Penny-Farthing Press

<=> This complex but accessible series devised by creator Trainor Houghton moves on in an exploratory-heavy issue, but thanks to writing great, Len Wein, and talented artist Claude St Aubin, it still provides adequate excitement and intrigue. A carefully crafted work worth reading. (CEB) 7

Canadian Indies

Transformers Energon 24

by Furman & Raiz + Armstrong; DreamWave Productions

<++> Ironhide is forced to relive his less-than-noble past when he is kidnapped by the enemy. Although the story is a bit clunky in places, this is an admirable attempt to bring some depth to the series, with an examination of often-ignored aspects of war. The art team does a very good job, although some of the inking is perhaps too heavy. (KG) 7

Transformers: Generation One 5

by Mick + Patyk & Figueroa + To; DreamWave Productions

<-> The good guys do some stuff, and there's some bad guys, and...I really have no idea what's going on. The art is excellent, but the story is horribly confused, reading like it's part of a crossover, and some of the dialogue is ridiculous (why would an alien robot be using baseball metaphors?). (KG) 4

UK Indies

Artesia Afire 4

by Smylie; Archaia Studios Press

<=> Mark Smylie's mature reader sword and sorcery epic continues apace as Artesia begins to realise the true resourcefulness of her enemies. It's a testament to both Smylie's writing and art that, despite action more talked about than shown, this remains readable. A real boon would be an illustrated "story so far" summary, as this saga is extraordinarily complex and multi-layered. (CEB) 7

The Complete Book of Scriptwriting

by Straczynski; Titan Books; £16.99

J. Michael Straczynski delivers a meaty tomb of intelligent and insightful information on all manner of scriptwriting. Comics aren't covered per se (expect a dedicated chapter in the next edition), but many of the principals discussed here apply soundly. Used in conjunction with the likes of Alan Moore's Writing For Comics (Avatar Press), this will prove invaluable assistance. (CEB) 9

K-Zone 9

by Naylor & various; Pacific Publications - Redan Company; £1.85

This self-proclaimed "coolest magazine on the planet" – which is also the biggest-selling kids' monthly in Australia – features celeb gossip, gaming tips, music and movie news, and notably, its very own Comic Zone. This includes such strips as *The Oddbodz*, *J-Squad*, *Thunderbirds* and Dillion Naylor's *Batrisha*. Slick, with something for everybody. (CEB) 7

Modesty Blaise – The Gabriel Set Up

by O'Donnell & Holdaway; Titan

And about time too! Modesty Blaise was doing the 'girl power' thing when the creators of Buffy and Lara Croft were barely out of nappies. This is the first in a series of collections of the Modesty Blaise newspaper strips that ran in the London Evening Standard from 1962 on. The strip was a landmark series in British comics and is long overdue for a decent reprint. Not only do the individual episodes work well in the context of complete stories, but they also work as stand alone 3 panel strips. Try cutting up the average Marvel/DC comic into three-panel chunks and see how well it works by way of comparison. An excellent slice of our National comics history that everyone should at least look at. (RN) 8

Strangehaven 16

by Millidge; Abiogenesis

<=> We might only get one issue a year but it's always a very good issue! If you haven't heard of this title, do yourself a favour, buy the two trades that are available and immerse yourself in the mysterious English village that is Strangehaven, full of quirky characters, secret societies and murder. All ably rendered in art that looks like beautifully painted photographs. (LH) 8

<=> After a busy year, Gary Millidge returns to his signature series of bizarre happenings in the mysterious village, as a pilot from the Battle of Britain crashlands in the present day and Billy presents a reveal-all letter to Sergeant Clarke. Still brilliantly intriguing – never mind how infrequently it appears – Millidge's skilful plotting and expertly crafted photo-referenced artwork continues to impress. (MAT) 8

UK Newsstand

Action Man 110

by Quinn & Griffiths; Panini UK

<=> Doomsayers state how comicdom can't help but deplete as no new blood is and more importantly, can, enter the medium. Panini Comics – producing such quality and original young reader-orientated fare as Action Man and Spectacular Spider-Man – is almost single-handedly invalidating this claim. And staying with invalidation, that's exactly what Action Force intends to do to the X-Robots this issue. (CEB) 7

Astonishing Spider-Man 114

by Straczynski + Romita & Hanna/Lee + Ditko; Panini UK

J. Michael Straczynski is here, but was it worth the wait? It's perhaps too early to tell. So far the premise, although intriguing, bears a worrying resemblance to the dreaded Clone Saga. Sandwiching this are an archive tale featuring Dr Doom and an extremely ugly cover from J. Scott Campbell. (KM) 8

Batman: Legends 9

by various; Panini UK

<=> Batman targets Ra's Al Ghul in the latest episode of the overlong *Hush*, while *Fearless* concludes, delivering on the promise of the opening chapter. One and a half Neal Adams reprints this issue, including the preposterous Batman/Superman Revenge Squads. All in all, a consistently enjoyable anthology. (KM) 7

Essential X-Men 114

by Claremont & Larocca/ Morrison & Yu; Panini UK

<-> Reprints the 2001 Annual, introducing Xorn. Leinil Francis Yu's landscape/ widescreen approach complements Morrison's 'action movie' plot, but it ultimately feels less *X2*, and more *Universal Soldier 2*. The impact is further diminished, being preceded by a standard portrait format X-Treme story, which also introduces a new X-Man, the uninspiringly named Lifeguard. (KM) 6

Judge Dredd The Megazine 220

by various; Rebellion

<+> The third and final episodes of Young

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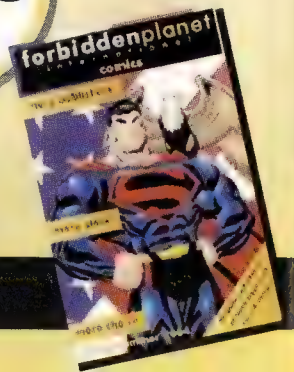

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Middenface in *Brigadoom*, Judge Dredd in *Damned Ranger* and Mean Machine all turn out to be the best of their run. The latest instalment of *Black Siddha* is not bad either. *Mega-City Noir* is sheer quality from Simon Spurrier and Frazer Irving. Reprints of *Charley's War* still look impressive, but *Helltrekkers* starts to drag, even though printed in five episode chunks. (DK) 7

The Mighty World of Marvel (vol 3) #18

by various; Panini UK

<+> Bullseye vs Elektra to the death. The impact of DD #181 has not diminished and in fact is greatly enhanced by updated colouring. A similarly 'remastered' Tower of Shadows tale showcases Steranko's art and Marvel's quirky horror material. However, the Hulk/Glob rematch is the undisputed highlight of this issue. Okay, I lied, it's complete cack. (KM) 8

Spectacular Spider-Man 99

by Handley & Haward; Panini UK

<=> Greeted by a Simon Williams and Jason Cardy cover which ranks up there with the top five best Marvel UK covers of all time, we're then treated to a frenetic Ferg Handley and Jon Haward tale of Spidey A.I.M.ing to stop Venom. With issue 100 up next, it's proof of the quality and dedication of the creative teams involved… and going by the preview, what a centenary celebration it looks set to be! (CEB) 7

Spectacular Spider-Man 100

by Handley & Williams; Panini UK

<+> There can't possibly be a better way to celebrate 100 issues than in the great Marvel tradition of a Hulk vs Thing slobberknocker, this time with Spidey stuck slap-bang in the middle. The terrifically dynamic perspectives tell us that this is artist Simon Williams' dream assignment, and along with writer Ferg Handley and inker Simon Ecob, he makes this an issue readers will remember. (CEB) 8

Toonastic

by various; (inside Toonastic's Lucky Bag Comic pack); £1.99

This colourful kids' comic features an impressive 12 original homegrown strips, including *Dick Turtle* by John Freeman, Mark Bennington's *Jungle Jane*, *Thor Losers* by Tim Perkins, and Nigel Kitching's *Bug-Eyed Monsters*. Fun escapism for young 'uns, definite value for money, and a nice showcase for Brit talent. (CEB) 7

Toxic 22

by Stringer + Short & Paterson; Egmont Magazines

<=> Representing comics this issue is *Team Toxic* by premier British strip cartoonist Lew Stringer, and *Rex!* by slick creative team John Short and Alex Paterson. For added interest to comic fans, there's news on Justice League action figures, as well as Spidey and X-Men DVDs. With video game cheats, competitions and lots more, this is a disgustingly good young boys' magazine. (CEB) 7

2000AD Progs 1390-1394

by various; Rebellion

<+> Tharg's Spring Attack sees two thirds of the material set in Mega-City One. A sublime Dredd one-off *(Tempus Fugitive)* and an atrocious one *(The Snozzburns)* precede *Terror*, by John Wagner and Colin MacNeil, a promising multi-part thriller. *Chopper*, the returning fan favourite, ends. *Low Life* benefits from Henry Flint's art, *Savage* improves with each episode, and *AHAB* pursues his mysterious goals via a murderous rampage. This is 2000AD at its very best. (DK) 8

Ultimate Spider-Man 30

by Bendis + Bagley & Thibert; Panini UK

<+> Two talking heads tales from Bendis: one spotlighting Aunt May; the second focusing on SHIELD agent Sharon Carter. The latter is the better story, being less cloying and leading neatly into next issue's *Ultimate Six*. Not a great issue, but a vast improvement on the last few months. (KM) 6

Warhammer 82

by Abnett & Smith + various; Black Library

<=> A great starter, as one of Black Library's coolest writers, Dan Abnett, handles one of its coolest races, the SSkaven. Then talents Si Spurrier and Tiernen Trevallion team up for *Daemonifuge*, before the terrific Jon Haward illustrates a Mitchel Scanlon-scripted *Of Ancient Blood*. Enjoyable flesh-rippin' romps. (CEB) 7

Wolverine and Gambit 100

by various; Panini UK

<+> A bumper 100-page centenary issue. Aside from the regular strips, a well-written feature attempts to put Logan's early history into chronological order. The recent Wolverine/Captain America miniseries premieres with yet another covert team running amok. Deadpool fans will be overjoyed to hear that he is replacing Gambit as co-star from #104. (KM) 7

Small Press

Armageddon Patrol: First Mission 2

by Short & Paterson; Alchemy Texts, 20 Grants Avenue Bournemouth BH1 4NR

<+> After the improved – but still lacking – first issue of John A Short's ongoing series about mutants in 'Nam, the latest sees a 100% visual improvement. New artist Alex Paterson contributes his finely rendered linework to the book, a style that wouldn't look out of place in a professional comic. Storywise, Short expands on his characters' backgrounds, but the series'

done-to-death setting continues to be its downfall. (MAT) 7

Bad Dog 2

by Northfield;
www.stupidmonsters.blogspot.com

Another short but perfect collection of bad dog stories from Gary Northfield. Very funny. Succinct and simple but packed with energy and originality. (LO) 8

An exquisitely presented handmade mini-comic by the ever-entertaining Northfield following the adventures of the bad dog and his owner. Northfield's art oozes confidence and cannot be faulted, while the story is simple yet utterly enjoyable. A real find. (AS) 9

Badly-Drawn Comics For Dummeez 7

by Keavney; £2 from Smallzone
10 Cleveland Avenue, High Ercall
Telford, Shropshire TF6 6AH

The cover is a spot-on pastiche of the once-popular, ubiquitous self-help manuals, and perfectly sets the tone as wry US creator Martha Keavney vents the frustrations of her life using self-deprecatory wit and irony. This anthology's highlight is the farcical rom-com parody *The Mix Up*, and what the simplistic cartooning sometimes lacks in finesse is gained in personality and charm. (JE) 7

The Black Flag 1

by Wood;
£2 from Smallzone
10 Cleveland Avenue, High Ercall
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Set in a dystopian near future, female urban renegade and people's saviour, The Black Flag, wages war against a corrupt British government. The highly promising illustrative artwork is raw and inconsistent, printed direct from creator Chaz Wood's somewhat flatly rendered pencils, while the awkward storytelling and stodgy script construe to make the intelligent, ambitious plot a trifle fussy. Minus the rough edges, the series has great potential. (JE) 5

Devilchild Volume II: Freakshow

by Winter & various;
£6.99 from Moonface Press
PO Box 5593, Southend-on-Sea
Essex SS1 2WY.

<+> The story of the reluctant Antichrist continues, and a number of shorter stories thrill and chill. This is good, occasionally excellent work, with a darker edge than the previous volume, and improvement shown in both writing and art. A must for fans of both horror and humour. (KG) 8

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The Outer Realms 1

by Willacy; £1.25 from Smallzone
10 Cleveland Avenue, High Ercall
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Earth is the battleground in a hidden war between opposing forces from parallel dimensions. Despite this 20-page A5 book's blatant influences and the threat of collapsing under the weight of too many ideas, the script is pleasingly upfront and pacy, handling the multiple narrative threads confidently. The stylistic artwork – akin to that of Humberto Ramos – has plenty of character, although more consistent use of spot-blacks might be beneficial. (JE) 5

Springheeled Jack 2

by Hitchcock;
Blackboar Press; £2.50 from
hitchcock_99@yahoo.com

An eagerly awaited second issue with a great deal going for it. High standard (if occasionally static) artwork nicely illustrates a gripping tale of consuming revenge, madness and mutation in an atmospheric Jack-the-Ripper era London. Well paced with a quality cliffhanger ending that leaves you with a great deal of anticipation of #3. One to watch. (AS) 8

Thrud 3

by Critchlow;
£2 from C. Critchlow, PO Box 371
Southport PR8 6YE

Issue 3 really did have a lot to live up to. Carl Critchlow's revival of the drunken uber-goon Thrud has been a welcome breath of fresh air, and with #3 Critchlow has managed to keep up the pace, quality and consistency effortlessly. Incredible artwork and subtle colouring top off a strip which contains some of the best examples of slapstick comedy timing I've ever read. This isn't highbrow, but Thrud will rock your socks off! (AS) 9

Warning This is Propaganda 3

by various;
£2 from Smallzone
10 Cleveland Avenue, High Ercall
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Don't be put off by the strapline, "The Comic Book for Working Class Radicals & Left Wing Intellectuals". Mixing humour with political commentary (akin to the books and films of Michael Moore) and executed with gusto, this is one of the freshest, wittiest satirical small press titles around. Amongst the genuinely amusing cartoon strips, such as *The Champagne Socialists* and *The Consumer*, is a revealing strip adaptation of Robert Tressell's *The Money Trick* and a smattering of succinct, eminently readable, insightful articles. (JE) 8

Zip Gun Presents: Chimera

by various;
£2.50 from 34 Banner Street
Wavertree, Liverpool L15 0HQ

Anthology centred around the theme "Chimera". Strong on art, weak on story. A great mix of well developed artistic styles. Overall the writing is too ambitious for the space provided, resulting in synopsis rather full stories. In general, some nice ideas that struggle to come to fruition, most could do with being fleshed out more. And (as usual) contains some reprinted material. (LO) 6

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Letters

CI, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (editorial@comicsinternational.com)

Dredd confusion

John Ridgway via e-mail

I READ the reviews of **Judge Dredd Megazine** 218 and 219 in **CI** #173 (by David Knight) with some confusion.

His review of issue 218 mentions "the Cursed Earth is given prominence in another fine edition". However for 219 he writes "Judge Dredd is let down by a lacklustre story and jarring digitally scanned backgrounds".

As the artist responsible for this story I am naturally concerned over adverse criticism, but, as mentioned earlier, I am somewhat confused as there were no digitally scanned backgrounds. The only part of the artwork that is digitally scanned is the black and white linework, which constitutes the foreground of the pictures. I draw the linework in a conventional manner in ink on paper.

As there is precious-little waterproof ink to be found anywhere, and even less paper or board that is suitable for colour work, I find it difficult to produce full-colour artwork. The only alternative is to colour using the computer. The artwork is scanned in and coloured on a separate layer under the black and white layer. The only problem with colouring in this way is that it is great for superheroes in silky costumes and for highly-polished metal surfaces, but it is far too slick for natural backgrounds – even unnatural backgrounds like the Cursed Earth.

Painting highly detailed backgrounds in Photoshop or similar is a long, long job without a guarantee of success. I therefore opted to generate backgrounds using Persistence of Vision Raytracer and Vue d'Esprit. Skies and various aircraft were generated using CyberMotion.

These programs create highly-detailed backgrounds – far more detailed than I could paint in a month of Sundays – but nothing about them is digitally scanned.

And that's you told, reviewer David! Must admit that, when proofreading the page, I wasn't too sure exactly what the phrase "digitally scanned" even meant. Whatever it does, John obviously doesn't do it.

Keeping the faith

Paul Davis
24 Beaver Towers, Mansell Close
Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 5YA

I THOUGHT I'd take this opportunity to share some experiences I've had buying comics recently.

Firstly: I bought £25 worth of back issues at a shop in London. And the owner tried charging me £35. An honest mistake?

Secondly, I bought some comics over the Internet. The seller claimed them to be superheroes, Marvel and DC, but when I got them a third were indies.

I can't be alone here. Anyone else been ripped off (or nearly ripped off) by bad comics dealers?

Any advice on where I should go in the future?

Given the likelihood of losing a customer over ten pounds, I'd say you could call that example a genuine mistake, Paul. Especially as it's the only one you quote and you have, presumably, bought over the counter more than once.

Besides, when you consider the cost of owning a shop in London, it would take an awful lot of successful tenner-style rip offs to make much difference to a shop's survival.

In the internet case, you presumably:
(a) Contacted the seller to point out his misleading description and ask for a refund.
(b) Threatened to post critical feedback on his member profile (and actually did so if you were ignored).
(c) Made murmurings about small claims court, Trades Descriptions Act and suchlike.

Ebay provides a "self-monitoring" system (also known as doing a Pontius Pilate). This means the onus is on you as they avoid getting involved in disputes. Sadly, the existance of such a system is wide open to abuse, with traders being anonymous and generally unaccountable for their actions.

Buying from established professional traders, shop or mail order, means you know these people need to be fair to avoid their business suffering from a bad rep. And, with comics, you always have CoBRA (the Comic Book Retailers Association) to fall back on – care of our address – in the even of an unresolved dispute.

Match and despatch

Rob Baldwin
18a Red Bank Road
Bispham, Blackpool FY2 9HR

JUST finished rereading Rich Johnston's *Lying in the Gutter* (**CI** #170). If there is any foundation in the rumour that Marvel may be axing such titles as **The Avengers**, **Iron Man**, **Thor** and **Captain Marvel**, may I suggest that Marvel considers rolling the clock back 40 or so years to the '60s, when it would publish two main characters in the one book – for example **Tales of Suspense** featuring Captain America and Iron Man and **Tales to Astonish** featuring Giant Man and the Hulk.

These double features were born out of the fact that Marvel could not produce these characters in their own titles, due to distribution restrictions – National, now DC, controlled Marvel's distribution at the time as it owned the distribution company and so restricted Marvel which had a contract with National to only produce a limited number of titles. The contract was an exclusive one, so Marvel could not use any other company to handle its distribution (one way to keep the competition in check, I suppose).

So if Marvel was to do this with established titles it might otherwise consider cancelling, the sales figures these characters currently bring in would be combined. I suspect that a Thor/Iron Man double feature would gain a healthy and respectable monthly sales figure, and Marvel's printing costs would be reduced considerably.

Although the loyal fan bases of these current titles would probably not be overjoyed with the fact that their favourite characters are having to share a book, it would surely be better than not seeing these characters in print at all.

Traditionally, core characters need to continue or there is the danger that comics publishers will just become commercial vehicles and idea finders for the major motion picture companies.

*Or, as IPC Boys' Juveniles called it in the 1970s, "hatch, match and despatch". In other words, new titles (like **Thunder**) were hatched, and if they failed to reach an acceptable sales level, they were matched with a similar but longer-established title which was in need of a boost itself (like **Lion**) and despatched into it.*

Invariably the final issue of the losing title would have a proud cover topline "Great news inside, readers!" but, when you found said item, it would tell you that your comic had been cancelled, with the best ideas being merged into something you'd probably never read or you'd have been buying it in the first place.

*The amazing thing was that it wasn't actually done to please or keep readers at all. It was a cunning stunt to fool retailers. And it generally worked. Gullible newsagents, back in those days of non-returnable unsolds, were convinced by publisher/distributor reps that if they sold, say, ten **Lion**s a week and five **Thunder**s, they'd sell 15 copies of the new **Lion & Thunder** combined title. And they usually fell for it, boosting the trade orders of the rejigged **Lion** by 50%.*

When you consider that cancellation kicked in at 250,000 a week back then, this

Mike Kazybrid's COMIC CUTS

Script by Paul Kristian

SUPERMAN 2ND SERIES #75? SURE, I CAN OFFER YOU A CHOICE. THERE'S THE REGULAR EDITION, WHICH YOU CAN READ FOR £2...
...THE PLATINUM EDITION IN A SEALED BLACK BAG, WHICH YOU CAN'T READ FOR £50...
...THERE'S THE PLATINUM BAGGED EDITION STILL SEALED IN ITS NEVER-OPENED MAILING ENVELOPE, WHICH COULD CONTAIN JUST ABOUT ANYTHING! THAT'S £100...
...OR YOU CAN HAVE THE BAGGED, STILL-SEALED-IN-ENVELOPE VERSION THAT'S BEEN SLABBED. YOU CAN'T SEE OR TOUCH THE ACTUAL COMIC. THAT'S £500. COME ON, MAKE YOUR MIND UP. WHICH ONE DO YOU WANT?

Send your script ideas to the above address and you receive the original art if yours is published.

Please note: All scripts are submitted on the understanding they become the copyright property of Kazybrid, Skinn and Comics International.

was a more than worthwhile tactic.

It even worked in many cases! If the newsagent had 50% more copies, given that he'd generally been selling out (after all, he kept things tight knowing he couldn't return unsolds) the comic would be more likely to be on display the full week, and attract new readers who hadn't seen it before.

It was phenomenally successful back then, so maybe you've a good idea here!

Gaimad's Sandmad

El Sloano via e-mail:
el_sloano@yahoo.com

PLEASE find enclosed a page from a recent issue of the US **MAD Magazine** (the one with the Jennifer Garner/Alias cover).

Damn, it's good to realise that I wasn't alone in seeing Neil Gaiman's **Sandman** as being the pretentious, meandering tripe that it always was. This is what it must be like to tell everyone that the emperor is stark naked!

Of course, this may just be my wretched, mal-informed opinion, and then again it may not. Let's throw this open to **CI**'s readership (Saturnyne excepted!), eh?

*Of course, were the situation to be different, everybody in the UK would have been able to see said spoof review for themselves. But the UK **MAD** closed, after 35 years, in 1994. Being the middle one of the three UK editors of such I had good contacts in its US offices, and I'd tried to pick up the licence for Quality to keep it going. But higher-ups in its new corporate owners blocked me, so you'll have to make do with reading the clipping on the right. ...Dez (Wot? Me Worried?) Skinn*

GRAPHIC NOVEL REVIEW

The popular *Blandman* series helped jumpstart the late-80s alt-comics boom. The books created a brand new subset of readers: cringing outcasts who could get their asses handed to them even by wussy superhero fans.

Neil Graveman left the series in 1996 (just like everyone in your life will eventually abandon you). Since then, diehard fans have speculated whether Graveman would ever write new stories about the characters. Well, yes and no. Technically, this book does contain seven new stories. But if you think seeing yet another stock character gasp, "You're...you're Death?" is a fresh experience, you probably also still get excited every time you see Batman swing on a rope.

Each story in "Endless Tripe" features one of the Witless, the seven beings who hang around humanity like the bodyguard who holds the umbrella for P. Diddy. The Witless include the enigmatic goth chick, the enigmatic guy in the black trenchcoat, the enigmatic guy in the monk's robe, the enigmatic guy with the mullet, and a few others whose personalities aren't as well-defined.

The book is labeled "Suggested For Mature Readers." Apparently, that means anybody who dots their i's with little skulls while laboriously writing Tori Amos lyrics onto their denim jackets with ballpoint pens. The paper is a high-quality stock, which can also be used for making superficial cuts on the forearm to get attention.

160 pgs., $24.95
For Mature Readers

Neil GRAVEMAN
The BLANDMAN
ENDLESS TRIPE
I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU. IT IS WHAT I DO. IT TURNS OUT THAT WAITING IS REALLY EASY TO DRAW.
DO YOU EVER ANSWER A QUESTION DIRECTLY? OR DO YOU ONLY PARCEL OUT CRYPTIC REMARKS, TO CREATE A FORMULAIC "ATMOSPHERE"?
I THINK YOU KNOW THE ANSWER TO THAT.

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Directory

An at-a-glance reference guide to everything that counts in comics

Internet Listings

Comics creators

Jessica Abel ..... www.artbabe.com
Neal Adams ..... www.nealadams.com
Kyle Baker ..... www.kylebaker.com
Leo Baxendale ..... www.reaper.co.uk/main.htm
Brian Bolland Art ..... www.velouria.com/Bolland
Mark Bright ..... www.mdbright.com
Eddie Campbell ..... www.eddiecampbellcomics.com
John Cassaday ..... www.johncassaday.com
Gene Colan ..... www.genecolan.com
Chuck Dixon ..... www.dixonverse.com
Will Eisner ..... www.willeisner.tripod.com
Warren Ellis ..... www.warrenellis.com
Phil Foglio ..... www.studiofoglio.com
Jon Haward ..... www.jonhawardart.com
Jeff Jones ..... www.jeffreyjones.com
Bob Layton ..... www.boblayton.com
Joseph Michael Linsner ..... www.linsner.com
Tom Lyle ..... www.tomlyle.com
Scott McCloud ..... www.scottmcloud.com
Grant Morrison ..... www.grant-morrison.com
Alex Ross Art ..... www.alexrossart.com
Dave Stevens ..... www.davestevens.com
William Stout ..... www.williamstout.com
Bryan Talbot ..... www.bryan-talbot.com
Barry Windsor-Smith .. www.barrywindsor-smith.com
Bernie Wrightson ..... www.berniewrightson.com

Comics publishers

Abstract Studios ..... www.strangersinparadise.com
AC Comics ..... www.accomics.com
Acclaim ..... ww.acclaim.com/comics
AiT/Planet Lar ..... www.astronautsintrouble.com
Antarctic Press ..... www.antarctic-press.com
Archie Comic Publications ... www.archiecomics.com
Caliber Comics ..... www.calibercomics.com
Cartoon Books ..... www.boneville.com
Chaos! ..... www.chaoscomics.com
Cool Beans World ..... www.coolbeansworld.com
com.x ..... www.comxcomics.com
CrossGen ..... www.crossgen.com
Crusade Entertainment ..... www.shiweb.com
Dark Horse ..... www.darkhorse.com
DC Comics ..... www.dccomics.com
Drawn and Quarterly ..... www.drawnandquarterly.com
Dynamic Forces ..... www.dynamicforces.com
Fantagraphics ..... www.fantagraphics.com
Harris Comics ..... www.vampirella.com
Heavy Metal ..... www.heavymetal.com
Knockabout Comics ..... www.knockabout.com
Marvel Comics ..... www.marvel.com
Northern Lightz ..... www.northernlightz.com
Oni Press ..... www.onipress.com
Quality/Warrior ..... www.comicsinternational.com
Sirius Entertainment www.sirius.choiceoneonline.com
Todd McFarlane Productions ..... www.spawn.com
Top Cow Comics ..... www.topcow.com
TwoMorrows ..... www.twomorrows.com
2000 AD www.2000ADonline.com
Viz (USA) ..... www.viz.com
Viz (UK) ..... www.viz.co.uk
WildStorm Comics ..... www.wildstorm.com

Manga and anime

AD Vision ..... www.advfilms.com
MVM ..... www.mvm-uk.co.uk

Downloadable software

PANELSYS
The ultimate panelologist's database system for organising your prized collection! Take a free trial today ..... www.panelsys.com

On-line auctions

COMIC BOOK POSTAL AUCTIONS
Ten successful years specialising in Golden & Silver Age, artwork and vintage UK comics.
..... www.compalcomics.com

eBay ..... www.ebay.co.uk
Heritage Comics Auctions . www.heritagecomics.com

NEAR MINT
The newest truly online auction system, dedicated to the collectible marketplace.
..... www.near-mint.com

Fantasy art and books

THE DRAGONS GALLERY
'Shop online' for original comic art, lithos, manga, fantasy and gothic art.
..... www.thedragonsgallery.co.uk

Festivals and fairs

Amadora Festival (Portugal) ... www.bdamadora.com
Angouleme BD (France) ..... www.bdangouleme.com
Comic-Con International (San Diego, USA)
..... www.comic-con.org
Megacon (Florida, USA) ... www.megaconvention.com
Raptus International Festival (Norway) www.raptus.no
Scottish Comic, Card & Collectables Fair
..... e-mail: marts@redhotcomics.demon.co.uk
Wizard World (Chicago, USA) www.wizarduniverse.com

New and back issue dealers

Ace Comics ..... www.acecomics.net
Avalon Comics ..... www.avaloncomics.co.uk
Black Dog Comics ..... www.blackdog-comics.com

CHAOS CITY COMICS
Award-winning site. High grade Silver Age items and Dave Gibbons original art
..... www.chaoscitycomics.com

COMIC BIZ
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..... www.comic-biz.com

Comics 24-7 Limited www.comics24-7.co.uk
Comics & Collectables www.comicsandcollectables.co.uk
Comics Forever ..... www.comicsforever.com

COMIX-SHOP.CO.UK
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..... www.comix-shop.co.uk

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Comics, toys, DVDS, posters, games, CCG. All available to order online. Next day delivery..... www.epicheroes.com

GOLDUST COMICS
Fantastic range of Golden, Silver and Bronze Age comics on our easy-to-use website.
..... www.goldustcomics.com

INCOGNITO
Access over 500,000 comics on the UK's fastest and funkiest comics website.
....www.incognitocomics.co.uk

Krypton Komics ..... www.kryptonkomics.com

MEGA-CITY COMICS
Largest graphic novel catalogue in the country – fast and easy online shopping.
..... www.megacitycomics.co.uk

Mighty World of Comicana ..... www.comicana.com

OBSCURE COMICS
For those comics that you can't find anywhere. Cheap too!
..... www.obscurecomics.com

Page 45 ..... www.page45.com

QUICKSILVER COMICS
The specialist Silver and Bronze Age site. Over 100,000 items listed, all with cover images ..... www.qscomics.com

SILVER ACRE COMICS
Over 900,000 comics in stock, 110,000 different items listed online.
....www.silveracre.com

Speeding Bullet ..... www.speedingbulletcomics.co.uk

On-line comics companies:

By popular demand, **Comics International** now runs an at-a-glance overview of the major sites for on-line comics collectors and creators. Have your company listed for only £5 (US $8) a month. Bookable in six-issue blocks, companies wishing to be included should send £30 or US $40 (UK: please add £5.25 to cover VAT) with trading name and website address.

♦ Major companies requiring bold and boxed entries should send £60 + £10.50 VAT per six-issue series, US $80 (£10/$16 per issue) and may add three lines of descriptive copy. Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International and sent to:
Comics International, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ
Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 1273 566 333 or e-mail details to: comicsinternational@yahoo.co.uk

Retail Index: UK

Key to the abbreviations used:

imp = air imported new issues
back = back issues stocked
gn = graphic novels
tpbk = trade paperbacks
STO = standing order service (new comics reserved)
s-p = small press and fanzines
ind = independent comics
u/g = underground comix
prl = peripherals/supplies
RPG = role playing games
CCG = customisable card games
merch = trading cards, videos, t-shirts, posters, etc

Sorry, no websites, this is a shop guide

When telephoning from outside the UK, drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe & Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

Central London

Avalon Comics, 143 Lavender Hill, Battersea, London SW11 5QJ. Mon-Thurs 10-5.45; Fri 10-6.30; Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 11-3.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 020 7924 3609

Book & Comic Exchange, 14 Pembridge Road, Notting Hill Gate, London W11. Mon-Sun 10-8. Nothing legal refused! (back, ind, u/g) 020 7229 8420

Comic Showcase 63 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0NE. Sun-Wed 10-7; Thurs-Fri 10-8; Sat 9.30-8 (imp, back, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, cartoon books, original art) 020 7434 4349

Forbidden Planet Megastore, 179 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8JR. Mon-Sat 10-7 (Thurs til 8); Sun 12-6 (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, sci-fi/fantasy, books, video/DVD, games, mags, toys) 020 7420 3666

Gosh!, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH (opposite British Museum). Mon-Sun 10-6 (Thurs-Fri to 7) (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, foreign, largest range newspaper strip compilations in UK) 020 7636 1011

Mega-City Comics, 18 Inverness Street, Camden Town, London NW1 7HJ. Mon-Sun 10-6 (Thurs-Fri to 7) (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV, fantasy/horror, body art, subculture) 020 7485 9320

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftsbury Avenue, London WC2H 8EH. Mon-Wed 10.30-6.30; Thurs-Sat 10-7; Sun 10-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film/TV/fantasy) 020 7836 5630

Orbital, 9 Old Compton Street, London W1. Mon-Sat 10.30-7; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, manga, toys, Star Wars) 020 7434 9363

Outer London

A Place in Space, 101 Church Street, Croydon, Surrey CR0 1RN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, prl, merch, sci-fi, original art) 020 8686 2400

Ashcan Ltd, 3 Eagle Star House, 299-301 High Street, Sutton, Surrey SM1 1LG. Tues-Wed/Fri 12-5; Thurs 9-6; Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch) 0845 166 2532

Atomic Comics, 1112 High Road, Chadwell Heath, Romford, Essex RM6 4AH. Mon-Tues 10.30-5.30; Wed 1-5.30; Thurs-Fri 10.30-6; Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV, art books, Games Workshop, toys, kits) 020 8597 8547

Calamity Comics, 160 Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2HR. Mon-Wed 10-6, (Thurs-Fri to 7); Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, fantasy film/TV, books, videos) 020 8427 3831

Epic Heroes, 21/23 Station Road, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 7JE. Mon-Sat 10-6. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, RPG, CCG, merch, toys, posters, Transformers) 020 8952 7181

Forbidden Planet, 175 North End, Croydon CR0 1TP. Mon-Fri 10-6 (Thursday to 7); Sat 9.30-6. (back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, u/g, CCG, merch) 020 8688 7190

Into the Void, 262 Streatham High Road, Streatham SW16 1HS. Mon-Sat 9.30-7; Sun 11-3. (imp, back, STO, merch, toys) 020 8677 7037

Krypton Komics, 252 High Road, Tottenham, London N15 4AJ (next to Tesco) Tues-Wed 11-6; Thurs 10.30-7; Fri 10.30-6; Sat 10-6 Nearest Tube: Seven Sisters Road. (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind) 020 8801 5378 fax: 8376 3174

They Walk Among Us, 26 Red Lion Street, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1RW. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (Thurs to 6); Sun 11-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, fantasy/sci-fi/horror, subculture) tel/fax: 020 8948 8476

30th Century Comics, 18 Lower Richmond Road, London SW15 1JP. Mon-Wed 10.30-6; Thurs-Fri 10.30-7; Sat 10.30-6; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, Gold/Silver/Bronze Age specialists, British comics/annuals, books) 020 8788 2052

South East

Ace Comics, 63/64 High Street, Colchester, Essex. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch) 01206 561912

The American Comic Shop, 1 Church Street, Chatham, Kent ME4 4BS (off High Street). Mon-Fri 10-5.30 (Tues until 5); Sat 9-5.30. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, action figures) 01634 817410

Calamity Comics 2, 90 Queens Road, The Broadway, Watford WD1 2LA. Mon-Tues 10-5.30; Thurs/Fri 10-7; Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, fantasy film/TV, books, videos) 01923 249293

Cartoon Shop, 19 East Square, Basildon, Essex SS14 1HT. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, merch) 01268 534194

Central City Comics, 4 Eagle Street, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 1JB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, foreign) 01473 233017

Chaos City, 20 Heritage Close, (off High Street), St Albans, Herts AL3 4EB. Mon-Thurs 10-5.30; Fri 10-7.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) 01727 838719

Comic Showcase, 19-20 St Clements Street, Oxford OX4 1AB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01865 723680

Comix-shop.co.uk, 7a High Street, Maidenhead SL6 1JN. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, tpbk, gn, merch, CCG, toys) 01628 777998

David's Comic Shop, 5 Sydney Street, Brighton, Sussex BN1 4EN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.45; Sun 11-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g) 01273 691012

Daydream Nation Trading Cards at Hive, 6 Kensington Gardens, Brighton BN1 4AL. Mon-Sat 10-6 (CCGs, cards, sports, Ultra-Pro) 01273 687 877

Forbidden Planet, 60 Burleigh Street, Cambridge CB1 1DJ. Mon-Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, CCG, merch, videos, sci-fi/fantasy books, film/TV magazines) 01223 301666

Forbidden Planet, 44 The Priory Centre, Dartford, Kent DA1 2HS. Mon-Wed 10.30-5.30; Thurs-Sat 10-5.30 (back, gn, ind, PRG, CCG, merch) 01322 224837

Incognito Comic Shop, 1-2 The Friars, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2AS. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 11-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film/TV) tel/fax: 01227 785898

Off World: The Sci-Fi Store, 142 Market Halls, Arndale Centre, Luton LU1 2TP. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, STO, s-p, CCG, merch, Star Trek/Wars, sci-fi collectables) 01582 736256

Planet Ace, 324-325 Chartwell North, Top Floor, Victoria Plaza, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS2 5SR. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch) 01702 613021

Steve's Comics, The Bookstall, Beckenham Junction Station, Rectory Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1HY. Mon-Fri 6-7; Sat 7-5 (back – Marvel, DC – ind, British comics, tpbk) 07977 751442

Slough Computers, 50 Village Shopping Centre, Slough, Berks SL1 1HP. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, STO, ind, cards, second hand computer games) 01753 521594

Time Trek, 46 High Street, Bromley, Kent BR1 1EG. Mon-Wed/Fri 9.30-5.30; Thurs 10-8; Sat 10-5.30; Sun 10-4 (imp, back, ind, gn, merch, STO, CCG, prl, sf TV/film) 020 8313 0677

Whatever Comics, 2 Burgate Lane, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2HH. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, kits) 01227 453226

Whatever Comics, 5 Middle Row, High Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1TF. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, model kits) 01622 681041

Midlands

Abstract Sprocket, 29 St Benedicts Street, Norwich, Norfolk NR2 4PF. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01603 624410

Comic Culture, The Mall, 257-259 High Street, Lincoln LN2 1HX. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 9-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, prl) 01522 546611

Forbidden Planet, 31 Cross Cheaping, Coventry CV1 1HF. Mon-Sat 9.30-6 (Thurs to 7) (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV) 024 76229672

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 129 Middle Walk, Broadmarsh Centre, Nottingham NG1 7LN. Mon-Sat 9-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV) 0115 958 4706

Forbidden Planet Superstore, 38 Priory Queensway, Birmingham B4 7LA. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (Thurs-Fri to 6) (imp, back, gn, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, books, games, mags, kits, toys, videos) 0121 236 3026

FPI Derby, 42/43 Main Centre (opposite Wilkinsons) Derby. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, merch, rock/film/TV memorabilia, computer games) 01332 206606

FPI Hanley, 52 Stafford Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 1JB. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 01782 279294 fax: 202381

FPI Leicester, 23 Silver Street, Leicester LE1 5EU. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, foreign, alchemy metalware, rock memorabilia) 01162 515266

FPI Nottingham, 11 Market Street, Nottingham. Mon-Fri 9-5.30; Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, foreign, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 0115 9484122

FPI Wolverhampton, 23 Victoria Street, Wolverhampton WV1 3NP. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 01902 717440

Ground Zero, 9 Toothill Lane, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG18 1NJ. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, prl, CCG, merch, toys) 01623 622017

Nostalgia & Comics (FPI), 14-16 Smallbrook, Queensway, Birmingham. Mon-Thurs 9.15-5.45; Fri-Sat 9.15-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 0121 643 0143

Page 45, 9 Market Street, Nottingham NG1 6HY. Mon-Sat 9-6. (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, manga) 0115 950 8045

Phoenix Comix, 29 Abington Square, Northampton NN1 4AE. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, RPG, CCG, action figures) 01604 602311

Travelling Man, c/o Gamestation, 1st Floor, 6 East Street, Derby DE1. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures, fantasy books, film/TV) 0115 950 9231

Travelling Man, c/o Gamestation, 1st Floor, 16 Angel Row, Nottingham NG1 6HL. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures, miniatures) 0115 950 9231

North West

All-American, 102 Newport Street, Bolton BL3 6AB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, STO, merch, Star Wars, WWF, action figures, S/Age, videos, records, CDs) 01204 366553

Alpha Omega Comics, 33-35 Library Street, Wigan, Lancs WN1 1NN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, merch, videos) 07796 854644

NEW **Batcave**, 39 Penny Street, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 6HQ. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, RPG, CCG, merch) 01254 667488

Forbidden Planet, 92 Bold Street, Liverpool L1 4HY. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (Thurs to 7) (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV, sci-fi/horror) 0151 707 1491

Forbidden Planet Megastore (FPI), 65 Oldham Street, Piccadilly, Manchester M1 1JR. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 12-5 (2 floors; imp, back, STO, RPG, CCG, merch, books, toys, film and TV tie-ins, manga) 0161 839 4777

Imagination Station, 41 Bank Street, Carlisle, Cumbria CA3 8HJ. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch)

Millennium Comics, 4 Church Road, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 5NT. Mon-Tues 10-5; Wed closed; Thurs-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, RPG, merch, action figures, toys) 0160 649255

Thunderbooks, 332 Lytham Road, Blackpool, Lancashire FY4 1DW. Mon/Tues/Thurs-Sat (Sundays in June-Oct only) 10-5.30; Wed 1-3.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, media collectors' items) 01253 348321 fax: 407813

Thunderbooks II, 116 Friargate, Preston, Lancashire PR1 9EE. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, merch) 01772 204287

Time Tunnel, 13 Earle Street, Crewe, Cheshire CW1 2BS. Mon and Wed-Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, merch, film/TV memorabilia, action figures, videos, model kits) 01270 215496

Worlds Apart (FPI), 58-60 Lime Street (city centre), Liverpool. Mon-Sat 10-6 (Fri 10-7) (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film) 0151 707 0839

North East

Books 'N' Comics, Unit 15, Forbes Building, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS1 4AW. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, merch, fantasy and film magazines, Doctor Who/Star Trek) 01642 249143

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 30 Eastgate, The Headrow, Leeds LS2 7JL. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, LF film books, film/TV mags, posters, toys, kits, trading cards, stills, Star Trek/Doctor Who) 0113 242 6325

Forbidden Planet, 59 Grainger Street, Newcastle NE1 5JE. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV mags, fantasy/sci-fi books, videos) 0191 261 9173

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 41 Dundas Street, Middlesbrough TS1 1HR. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (Thurs until 7) (imp, gn, s-p, STO, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, video, action figures, film/TV, manga) 01642 248889

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 12 Matilda, off the Moor, Sheffield. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 9.30- 5.30 (imp, back, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, original art, model kits, sci-fi/fantasy books, horror magazines, newspaper strip books) 0114 276 9475

The Last Picture Show, 38-39 The Lanes, The Oasis, Meadowhall Centre, Sheffield S9 1EP. Mon-Thurs 10-8; Fri 10-9; Sat 9-7, Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV and rock memorabilia) 0114 256 9604 fax: 255 3399

Millennium Comics, Stall 141, Warrington Indoor Market. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, RPG, merch, action figures, toys) 01925 575657

Off-World Comics, 200 Park View, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear NE26 3QP. Mon-Tues/Thurs 10-5.30 (closed Wed); Fri 10-6; Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, CCG, merch) 0191 251 2288

Sheffield Space Centre, 33 The Wicker, Sheffield. Mon-Sat 10-5 (Wed closed) (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, merch, Star Trek specialists) 0114 275 8905

Travelling Man, Unit 8/9, The Corn Exchange, Call Lane, Leeds LS1 7BR. Mon-Thurs 10-5.30; Fri-Sat 9-5.30; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures) 0113 242 7227

Travelling Man, 54 Goodramgate, York YO1 2LF. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures) 01904 628787

West Country

American Dream Comics, 72 Walcot Street, Bath BA1 5BD. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, original art, hobby kits, CDs) 01225 424881

Area 51, 143 Gloucester Road, Bristol. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, original art) 0117 924 4655

Automattic Comics, Unit 2, 17 Pickwick Road, Corsham SN13 9BQ. Mon-Tues 12-5; (Wed closed); Thurs-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01249 701647

Collector's Choice, 45 Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1TX. Mon-Sat 9-5 (S/Age, British comics/annuals, vintage mags, toys, memorabilia) 01452 410232

Fantasyland Comics, Unit 4, The Colwell Centre, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 8NJ. Mon-Fri 11-5; Sat 10-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch)

Forbidden Planet, 30 Penn Street, Bristol BS1 3AS. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30 (Thurs to 7); Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV mags, subculture) 0117 929 8692

Forbidden Planet, 43-45 East Street, Southampton SO14 3HN. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30 (Thurs to 6); Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV) 023 80230991 fax: 230996

Ian's Books & Comics, 195a Albert Road, Southsea, Portsmouth PO4 0JP (next to Tesco). Mon-Tues/Thurs-Fri 10.30-5.15 (Wed closed); Sat 10-5.15 (imp, back, tpbk, STO, s-p, prl, toys) 023 92422731

Into the Void, 11 Rodbourne Road, Swindon SN2 2AG. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, CCG, merch) 01793 434363

Kaboom, 65 High Street, Totnes, Devon TQ10 9PU. (new, back, action figures, t-shirts, board games, RPG, import computer games, mail order) 01803 863049

Kathies Comics, Unit BG29, Broadmead Gallery, The Galleries Shopping Centre, Bristol BS1 3XB. Mon-Wed/Fri-Sat 9-5.30; Thurs 9-6; Sun 11-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 0117 922 1170

Kathies Comics, 20 Market Avenue, Plymouth, PL1 1PH. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 01752 257800

Paradox Comics, 17 High Street, Poole, Dorset BH15 1AB. Mon-Fri 10.30-5; Sat 10-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, ind, merch, videos) 01202 661346

Wonderworld, 540 Christchurch Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth, Dorset. Mon-Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, CCG, merch, film/TV/media, beanie babies) 01202 394918

Wales

Cardiff's Comic Guru Presents!, 20-22 Wyndham Arcade, Cardiff CF10 1FJ. Mon-Sat 10-6 (Thurs 'til 9) (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, CCG, merch) 029 202 29119

Cardiff Fantasy Centre, 1st Floor, Jacobs Market, West Canal Wharf, Cardiff. Sat 9.30-4.30 (imp, back, STO; established over 20 years) 029 206 58184 (eves)

Comix Shoppe, 13 Shoppers Walk, Swansea SA1 3AY. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, anime, Games Workshop) 01792 642097

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 5 Duke St, Cardiff. Mon-Wed 10-5.30, Thurs 10-6.30, Fri 10-5.30, Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, sci-fi fantasy/horror books, Star Trek/Wars) 029 202 28885

Negative Zone, Provision Market Gallery, High Street, Newport, Gwent NP9 1DD. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind; established for 12 years) 01633 222159

Scotland

Asylum Books & Games, 29 Adelphi, Aberdeen AB11 5B2. Mon-Sat 10-6 (Mon/Thurs to 8); Sun 12-5 (imp, back, STO, new/second hand RPG, CCG, books, original art) 01224 574637

Black Hole Comic Shop, Unit 3, 5 Victoria Road, Dundee DD1 1ER. Mon-Thurs 10-5; Fri-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, second hand records, CDs, videos) 01382 221037

City Centre Comics, 51 Parnie Street, Glasgow G1 5LU. Tues-Sat 10-5 (back) 0141 552 2208

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 12 Schoolhill, Aberdeen AB10 1JX. Mon-Fri 10-6 (Thurs until 7); Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 12-5 (imp, gn, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, CCG, merch) 01224 622131

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 40-41 South Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1LL. Mon-Wed 10-5.30; Thurs 10-6.30; Fri-Sat 10-5.30; Sun 12-5. (imp, STO, s-p, ind, merch, foreign) 0131 558 8226

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 168 Buchanan St, Glasgow G1 2LW. Mon-Sat 10-5.30; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 0141 331 1215

Justice Comics, Unit 36, The Arcade, Stirling FK8 1AX. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch) 01786 447687

Kapow!, 28 Allison Street, Govanhill, Glasgow G42 8NN (off Pollokshaws Road). Tues-Sat 11-6 (buy and sell back, gn, ind, mags, videos, DVDs, new and second-hand books, merch) 0141 4241600

Plan 9, 9 Rosemount Viaduct, Aberdeen AB25 1NE. Mon-Sat 10-5 (Thurs to 6); Sun 1-4. (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, WWF, merch, sci-fi) tel/fax: 01224 624467

Red Hot Comics, Block D Unit 7, Glenwood Business Park, Glenwood Place, Glasgow G45 9UH. Sat 11.30-6; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 0141 630 0049

Northern Ireland

Crosshatch, Unit 8, Smithfield Market, Belfast BT1 1JD. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 10-5.30 (original art, prints, autographs, cover recreations) 07739 871415

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 52-54 Ann Street, Belfast BT1 4EG Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch) 028 90438744

Planet Ace Derry, 33 Shipquat St, Derry, Londonderry BT48 6DF. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) 02871 369787

Retail Index: USA

When telephoning from outside the USA, include the bracketed 00. Out-of-town US calls begin with the 1 prefix only. The following is a fraction of the estimated 3,000+ US comics stores.

Alabama

Optic Nerve, 1930 12th Avenue South, Birmingham, AL 35205 (film, newsstand, ind) (00)1 205 933 2787

Alaska

Bosco's in Spenard, 2606 Spenard Road, Anchorage 99503. Mon-Sat 11-8, Sun 12-6 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, anime, merch) (00) 1 907 274 4112

Bosco's Diamond Centre, 800 East Diamond Boulevard, Anchorage 99577. Mon-Fri 10-9; Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, anime, games, Star Wars/Trek) (00) 1 907 344 3963

Bosco's in Eagle River, 11432 Business Boulevard, Eagle River. Mon-Sat 12-8, Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, merch) (00) 1 907 696 5166

Arizona

Lost Dutchman, 747 West Camelback Road, Phoenix, AZ 85013. Mon-Sun 10-7. (new, back) (00)1 619 278 0371

California

Comickaze, 5525 Clairemont Mesa Boulevard, San Diego, CA 62117-2342. Mon-Fri 11-7; Sat 11-6; Sun 12-6 (new, back, CCG, merch)(00)1 858 278 0371

Comix Experience, 305 Divisadero Street, San Francisco, CA 94117. Mon-Sat 11-7; Sun 12-5 (new, back) (00)1 415 863 9258

Flying Colors Comics, 2980 Treat Blvd, Concord, CA 94518. Mon-Sat 11-7 (Fri until 8); Sun 12-6 (new, back, ind, cards, merch) (00)1 510 825 5410

Lee's Comics, Inc., 1020-F N Rengstorff Avenue, Mountain View, CA 94043. Mon-Sun 10-9 (new, back: 1930s to date, anime, manga, s-p, adult, merch) (00)1 650 965 1800

Lee's Comics, Inc., 2222 South El Camino Real, San Mateo, CA 94403. Mon-Sun 10-9, (new, back: 1930s to date, anime, manga, adult, s-p, merch) (00)1 650 571 1489

Meltdown Comics & Collectibles, 7522 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90046 (toys, comics, books) (00)1 323 851 7223

Stand-Up Comics, 10020 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530. Mon-Fri 11 7; Sat-Sun 11-6 (new, back, cards, anime, CCG, merch) (00)1 510 525 3344

Third Planet, 3822 Sepulveda Boulevard, Torrance, CA 90505. Sun-Thurs 11-8; Fri + Sat 11-9 (new, ind, back, CCG, RPG, GW, sci-fi/fantasy, anime, merch) (00)1 310 791 6227

Hawaii

Gecko Books & Comics, 3613 Waialae Avenue, Honolulu, 96816. Mon-Sun 9-9 (new, back, cards, toys, merch) (00)1 808 732 1292

Illinois

Comic Kingdom, 5941 W Irving Park Road, Chicago, IL 60634. (new, back) (00)1 773 545 2231

Louisiana

Comic Cosmos, 343 W Esplanade Avenue, Kenner, LA 70065. Mon-Thur 11.30-7, Fri-Sat 11-7.30, Sun 12-5 (new, back, cards, CCG, toys, anime) (00)1 504 286 0039

Crescent City Comics & Cards, 6111 Elysian Fields, New Orleans, LA 70122. Mon-Sat 11-7, Sun 12-6 (new, back, cards, CCG, RPG, anime) (00)1 504 286 0039

More Fun Comics, 8200 Oak Street, New Orleans, LA 70118. Tues-Sat 11-7, Sun-Mon 12-6 (new, back, cards, CCG, merch, toys, CDs) (00)1 504 865 1800

Maine

Casablanca Comics, 151 Middle Street, Portland, ME 04101. Mon-Sat 10-9, Sun 12-7 (new, back, cards, CCG, RPG, merch, art) (00)1 207 780 1676

Casablanca Comics, 778 Roosevelt Trail, Windham, ME 04062. Mon-Fri 11-7, Sat 10-6, Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, merch)(00)1 207 892 0056

Massachusetts

Comicopia, 464 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02215. Mon-Sun 11-7 (Wed 10-8) (new, merch, CCG, manga, tpbk)(00)1 617 266 4266

Minnesota

Uncle Sven's Comic Shoppe, 1838 St Clair Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55105. Mon-Fri 3-6, Sat 11-4 (new, back, tpbk, gn, videos, action figures, CCG, RPG; est 19 years) (00)1 651 699 3409

New York State

Earthworld Comics, 327 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12206. Mon-Wed 11-6; Thur-Fri 11-7, Sat 11-6, Sun 12-5 (new, back, ind, manga/anime, cards, merch) (00)1 518 465 5495

Forbidden Planet (FPI associate), 840 Broadway (at 13th St, NY 10003. Mon-Sat 10-10; Sun 12-10. (new, ind, back, RPG, merch, fantasy) (00)1 212 473 1576

Jim Hanley's Universe Ltd, 4 West 33rd Street (opposite Empire State Building), NY 10001. Mon-Sat 9am-11pm; Sun 10-9. (Everything to do with comics) (00)1 212 268 7088

Jim Hanley's Universe Ltd, 325 New Dorp Lane, Staten Island, NY 10306. Mon-Sun; 12-9. (Everything to do with comics) (00)1 718 351 6299

Midtown Comics, 200 West 40th Street, NY 10018 (00)1 212 302-8192

Ohio

The Laughing Ogre, 4258 North High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43214. Mon-Sat 10-9; Sun 12-5 (new, back, cards, merch) (00)1 614 267 6473

Oklahoma

Time Warp, 588 SE Washington Street, Bartlesville, OK 74006 (new, back, cards, games, toys, CDs, sci-fi/fantasy) (00)1 918 335 3373

Pennsylvania

Comic Castle, 17 West Fourth Street, Williamsport, PA 17703 Mon-Sun 10-9 (new, back) (00)1 717 322 8763

Golden Eagle, Berkshire Square, 1159 Berkshire Boulevard, Wyoming, PA 19610 (new, back, games, CCG, cards, Star Wars/Trek) (00)1 610 376 8255

Golden Eagle, Fairgrounds Square Mall, Reading, PA 19605 (new, back, games, CCG, cards, Star Wars/Trek) (00)1 610 921 3160

Tennessee

Collector's World, 1511 E Main Street, Murfreesboro, TN 37130. Open all week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 615 895 1120

Collector's World, Hickory Plaza South Central, 5751 Nolensville Road, Nashville, TN 37211. Open all week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 615 895 1120

Collector's World, 10820 Kingston Park #10, Knoxville, TN 37922 Open all week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 423 675 6830

Collector's World, 4006 Granny White Park, Nashville, TN 37204 (new, back, CCG, merch)(00)1 615 385 8136

Texas

Cliff's Comics, 2205 West Berry Street, Fort Worth, TX 76110. (new, back, cards, merch) (00)1 817 927 7172

Collectible Heroes, 502 West Calton Road #307, Laredo, TX 78041. Mon-Wed 2-7.30; Thurs-Sat 11.30-7.30 (new, back, cards, merch) (00)1 956 791 8428

Dragon's Lair Comics & Fantasy, 616 West 34th Street, Austin, TX 78705 (new, back, games, anime, miniatures, prl) (00)1 512 454 2399

Virginia

Thore Comics, 3514 Oaklawn Boulevard, Hopewell, VA 23860. Mon-Sat 11-7, (new, back, Silver Age, sci-fi, M:TG, cards, vinyl)(00)1 804 458 9561

Trilogy Shop, 700 E Little Creek Road, Norfolk, VA 23518. Mon-Fri 11-7, Sat 10-7, Sun 12-6 (new, back, merch) (00)1 757 587 2540

Wisconsin

Lost World of Wonders, 6713 West Oklahoma Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53219 (00)1 414 328 4651

Direct Market Retailers:

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Comics International, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ

Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International. Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 1273 566 333 or e-mail: comicsinternational@yahoo.co.uk

The letters **(FPI)** after various entries indicates that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet International Ltd**

Retailers: International

Australia

Arcadia Unbound, 267 Forest Road, Hurstville, NSW 2220. Mon-Fri 10.30-7, Sat 10-4, Sun 12-3 (imp, back, manga, merch, CCG) (0061) 2 9585 1489

Books & Bounties/Comics Haven, 157a Charters Towers Road, Townsville, Queensland 4812. Mon-Sat 9-6 (imp, back, gn, merch, RPG, CCG) (0061) 7 4779 2408

Fan Attic, 1st Floor, 91 Elizabeth Street, Brisbane, Queensland 4002. Mon-Sun 9.30-5.30 (toys, Star Wars, sci-fi collectibles) (0061) 7 3221 1420

Kinda Lotsa Comics and Stuff, Shop 4, 503-511 King Street, Newtown, Sydney, NSW. Mon-Sat 10.30-7.30 (back, toys, merch)(0061) 2 9565 1054

Known Space Books, 1st Floor, 108 Gawler Place, Adelaide, SA 5000. Wed-Sat 12-6 (US/UK back) (0061) 8 8223 4304

Phantom Zone, 23 Anderson Street, Chatswood, NSW 2067. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 9411 3709

Phantom Zone, 198 Mann Street, Gosford, NSW 2250. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 43 25 4599

Phantom Zone, 207 George Street, Liverpool, NSW. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 9601 2622

Phantom Zone, 285 Hunter Street, Newcastle, NSW. 2300. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 4929 5717

Phantom Zone, 101a Argyle Street, Parramatta, NSW 2150 Mon-Fri 9-6; Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, books, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 9891 1848

Phantom Zone, 268 Crown Street, Wollongong, NSW. 2500. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, gn, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 4228 7393

Austria

Comic Treff, Getreidemarkt 2-4, 1010 Vienna. Mon-Fri 10-7, Sat 10-1 (imp, back, gn, CCG) (0043) 11 586 76 27

Belgium

Forbidden Zone, 25 Rue de Tamines, 1060 Brussels. (3 floors; imp, back, merch, US/French, STO, toys) (0032 2) 534 63 67 (fax 538 24 52)

Canada

Connection MD, 1539 Van Horne Avenue, Montreal, Quebec H2V 1L4. Mon-Sat 11-6 (new, merch, back, CCG) (00)1 514 948 2627

Dragon Lady Comics & Paper Nostalgia, 609 College Street, Toronto, Ontario M6G 1B5. (00)1 416 536 7460

Little Shop of Heroes, 160 Wallace Avenue, South Listowel, Ontario N4W 1X9 (00)1 519 291 2281

Silver Snail Comic Shop, 367 Queen Street West, Toronto M5V 2A4. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 11-8; Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5 (00)1 416 593 0889

France

Album, 67 boulevard St Germain, 75005 Paris. Mon-Sat 10-8; Sun 12-7 (imp, back, gn) (0033) 53 10 00 60

Album, 6 rue Dante, 75005 Paris. Mon-Sat 10-8; Sun 12-7 (imp, back, gn) (0033) 43 54 67 09

Alpha Omega, 25 rue de la Clef, 59800 Lille. Mon 2.30-7.30, Tue-Sat 10.30-12.30/2.30-7.30 (imp, back, French, merch, trading/gaming cards, toys, RPG, Wars/Trek, B5, L5R) (0033) 320 319 375

Astro City, 22 rue Masurel, 59800 Lille. Mon 3-7.30; Tue-Sat 10-12.30, 2-7.30 (imp, manga, cards, merch, kits) (0033) 320 55 1010

Impact Comics, 64 rue Condorcet, 75009 Paris. Mon-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, merch, CCG)(0033) 42 80 30 10

L'Antre des Dragons, 56 rue de Loup, 33000 Bordeaux. Mon-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0033) 55 65 17378

Les Nageurs de Sable, 14 rue Courteline, 37058 Tours. Mon-Sat 11-1/2-7 (imp, back, cards, merch) (0033) 2 47 39 52 40

Pulps, 14 bld Morland, 75004 Paris. Mon-Sat 11-7 (imp, back, RPG) (0033) 1 42 72 55 25

Germany

Black Dog Comics, Rodenberg Strasse 9, 10439 Berlin. Mon-Fri 11-6.30, Sat 11-2 (imp, back, gn, t/cards) (0049) 30 4473 6486

Grober Unfug, Zossenerstrasse 32-33, 10961 Berlin. Mon-Sat 11-7 (imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (0049) 30 6940 1490

Greece

Metropolis Comics, 94 Metropoleos St, 54622 Thessaloniki. Mon-Sat 10.30-3.30/7.30-11.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0030) 3 193 7775

Solaris, 6 Botasi Str, 10682, Athens. Mon-Sat 9-3.30/5-8.30 (imp, back, gn, merch) (0030) 1 384 1065

Holland

Henk Lie's Comics & Manga Store, Zeeduk 104, 1012BB Amsterdam. Mon-Sat 11-6; Sun 11-9 (imp, cards, merch, CCG) (0031) 20 421 3688

Hungary

Troll Kepregenyta'r, Terez Krt 13, Budapest 1067. Mon-Fri 10-6, Sat 10-1(imp, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0036) 1 322 6026

Irish Republic

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 5-6 Crompton Quay, Dublin 2. Mon-Sat 10-6 (Thurs 10-7); Sun 12-5 (imp, back, ind, merch, u/g, UK, gn, STO) (0035) 3167 10688

Sub-City Comics, 2 Exchequer Street, Dublin 2. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3167 71902

Sub-City Comics, Unit 10, Level 1, Corbettcourt Centre, Eyre Square, Galway. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3915 65994

The 3rd Place, Crow Street, Temple Bar, Dublin 2. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3163 36965

Italy

Avalon, via Battisti 9/b, Bologna. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10.30-1/2-7.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 051 234459

Avalon, via Pedriali 21, Forli. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 0543 33523

Avalon, via Settembrini 20, Milan. Mon 3.30-7.30, Tue-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 022 9400410

Avalon, via Foscolo 3, Padova. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7. (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch)(0039) 049 658290

Avalon, via Bissolati 68, Rome. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, back, gn, CCG, cards, merch)

Avalon, via Magenta 0, Torino. Mon 3.30-7, Tue-Sat 10.30-1, 2-7.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 011 5617252

Forbidden Planet, via Pinerolo 11/15, 00182 Rome (imp, back, gn) (0039) 06 70305702

Il Marchio Giallo, via Deghi Scipioni 116, Rome. Tue-Sat 10.30-1/2-7.30 (imp, back, merch, kits) (0039) 06 361 40 60

La Borsa del Fumetto, via Lecco 16, 20124 Milano. (imp, back, European and RPG, CCG) (0039) 11 5617252

Malaysia

The Mind Shop, Starhill Centre, Jalang Bukit Bintag, Kuala Lumpur. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 241 8871

The Mind Shop, S 58 Bandar Utama, Petaling Jaya. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 719 8246

The Mind Shop, Jin SS21/39, Petaling Jaya. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 717 6602

New Zealand

Heroes For Sale, Level 2, 62 Queen St, Auckland. Mon-Sat 10-7 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g)(0064) 9 307 0682

Whitcoulls Corner Branch, 210 Queen Street, Private Bag 92098, Auckland. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, s-p, merch, ind, u/g) (0064) 9 356 5400 (fax: 9 356 5408)

Portugal

BdMania, Rua das Flores 67-71 R/C, 1200 Lisboa. Mon-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, CCG, merch) (00351) 21 346 1207

Interzona, Centro Comercial Brasilia, Loja 203, Rua Luis Veaga Lertao 98-120, 6050 Porto. Mon-Sat 11-11 (imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (00351) 22 609 1460

Mundo Fantasma, Centro Comercial Brasilia, Rua Luis Veiga Leitao, 98/120, 1 Andar-Loja 203, 4050-399 Porto. Mon-Sat 11-11 (US imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (00351) 22 609 1460

South Africa

Euroniag, Shop 79A, East Rand Mall, Boksburg, Johannesburg. Mon-Sun 9-10 (imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (0027) 11 896 3773

Zed Bree's Comic Universe, Mediterr-anean Building, 24 Tenth Ave, Edenvale 1610 Gauteng. 9.30-6 (imp, merch, gn, CCG) 002711 453 4215 (fax 453 4459)

Spain

Gigamesh, RDA San Pedro 53, 08010 Barcelona. Mon-Sat 10-1.30/4.30-8 (imp, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0034) 3 246 6359

Sweden

Comics Heaven, Stora Nygatan 23, 11127 Stockholm. Mon-Sat 10-6.30 (imp, back, gn, merch)(0046) 8 202516

Switzerland

Analph Comicladen Strassburgstr, 10 PO Box 1030, 8004 Zürich. (0041) 1 2419695 fax 1 2403442

The letters **(FPI)** after entries indicate that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet International Ltd**

International Festivals

A listing of the world's major comics festivals and conventions. For further information, call the organisers on the phone, fax or e-mail numbers provided. To view updates, contact them on their websites. Organisers' estimates of their previous year's attendance is given in brackets.

July 22-25: United States

COMIC-CON INTERNATIONAL '04, San Diego, California. Organisers: Comic-Con International, PO Box 128458, San Diego, CA 92112-8458. Tel: 001 619 491 2475 fax: 001 619 414 1022. Website: www.comic-con.org

August 13-15: United States

WIZARD WORLD CHICAGO CON 2004. Organisers: Wizard World Chicago, 151 Wells Avenue, Congers, NY 10920-2064. Tel: 001 608 226 0200. Website: www.wizarduniverse.com

August 14-15: England

MEMORABILIA '04, NEC, Birmingham. Organisers: Made in Heaven, 1 Star Street, Moffat, Dumfriesshire DG10 9DR. Tel: 01683 220787 fax: 01683 220798. Website: www.memorabilia.co.uk

August 27-29: Canada

CANADIAN NATIONAL COMIC BOOK EXPO 2004, Metro Toronto Convention Center, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Website: www.hobbystar.com

September 3-6: United States

DRAGON*CON 2004, Atlanta, Georgia. Organisers: Dragon*Con, PO Box 16459, Atlanta, GA 30321-9998. Tel: 001 770 909 0115 fax: 001 770 909 0112. Website: www.dragoncon.org

September 9-11: Norway

RAPTUS INTERNATIONAL COMICS FESTIVAL. Organisers: Raptus Bergen Comics Festival, PO Box 768, Central 5807 Bergen, Norway. Tel/fax: 0047 55 32 88 55. Website: www.raptus.no

September 11-12: United States

BALTIMORE COMIC-CON, The Baltimore Convention Centre, One West Pratt Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201. Contact: Marc Nathan. Tel: 001 410 526 7410. Website: www.comicon.com/baltimore

September: Finland

THE 19TH HELSINKI COMICS FESTIVAL. Organisers: The Finnish Comics Society, PL 927, 00101 Helsinki, Finland. Tel/fax: 00358 50 407 0553. E-mail: tiina-riikka.rauhala@humak.edu Date: TBA

October 9-10: Belgium

FACTS 2004, ICC Citadelpark, 9000 Gent. Organisers: Forbidden Zone, 25 Rue de Tamines, 1060 Brussels, Belgium. Tel: 0032 2 534 63 67 fax 0032 2 538 24 52. Website: www.facts-convention.com

October 22-24: England

LONDON COMIC FESTIVAL, Holiday Inn, Bloomsbury. Organisers: Comic Festival, PO Box 48, Clevedon, Bristol BS21 7LQ. Website: www.comicfestival.co.uk

October: Italy

LUCCA COMICS. Organisers: Lucca Comics, Via della Cavallerizza 11, 55100 Lucca, Italy. Tel: 0039 583 48522 fax: 0039 583 91203. Date: TBA

November 5-7: England

COMIC EXPO, Ramada Hotel, Bristol. Organisers: Area 51 & Comics International. E-mail: comicexpo@fsmail.net. Website: www.komixworld.com

November 13-14: Scotland

MEMORABILIA '04, The SECC, Glasgow. Organisers: Made in Heaven, 1 Star Street, Moffat, Dumfriesshire DG10 9DR. Tel: 01683 220787 fax: 01683 220798. Website: www.memorabilia.co.uk

November 27-28: England

MEMORABILIA '04, NEC, Birmingham. Organisers: Made in Heaven, 1 Star Street, Moffat, Dumfriesshire DG10 9DR. Tel: 01683 220787 fax: 01683 220798. Website: www.memorabilia.co.uk

Comics Publishers

North America

Unlike Europe, North American publishers invariably favour indie status to that of being labelled small press. This results in there being hundreds of comics publishers.

While circulations vary immensly, the following are the continent's major comicbook producers with titles printing between 5,000 and 150,000 copies. Contact telephone numbers are given where readily available.

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM, PO Box 1674 Station C, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2G 4R2 (Cerebus)

ABSTRACT STUDIOS, PO Box 271487, Houston, TX 77277-1487 (Strangers in Paradise)

AC COMICS, PO Box 521216, Longwood, FL 32752-1216 (adventure titles, Golden Age superhero and western reprints)

ACCLAIM COMICS, 1 Acclaim Plaza, Glen Cove, NY 11542 (game tie-in adventure, Valiant superhero imprint. dormant) (00)1 516 656 5000

AiT/PLANET LAR, 2034 47th Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94116 (graphic novels) (00)1 415 504 7516

ALTERNATIVE COMICS, 503 North West 37th Ave, Gainesville, FL 32609-2204 (alternative and graphic novels) (00)1 352 373 6336

AMERICAN MEDIA CONSUMER ENTERTAINMENT, INC, 600 East Coast Avenue, Lantana, Florida 33464 (Cracked) (00)1 561 586 1111

ANTARCTIC PRESS, 7272 Wurzbach Parkway , Suite 204, San Antonio, Texas TX 78240 (adventure and US manga)

ARCHIE COMIC PUBLICATIONS, 325 Fayette Avenue, Mamaroneck, NY 10543 (humour) (00)1 914 381 5155

AVATAR PRESS, 9 Triumph Drive, Urbana, IL 61802 (horror fantasy titles) (00)1 217 384 2216

AWESOME ENTERTAINMENT, 9744 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 402, Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, CA 90212 (adventure titles; dormant)

BONGO ENTERTAINMENT, 1440 South Sepulveda Boulevard, 3rd Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90025 (The Simpsons and related humour titles) (00)1 310 966 6168

CALIBER COMICS, 225 North Sheldon Road, Plymouth, MI 48170 (black and white adventure titles) (00)1 734 462 0457

CARTOON BOOKS, PO Box 16973, Columbus, OH43216 (Bone and related)

CROSSGEN ENTERTAINMENT, INC, 4023 Tampa Road, Suite 2400, Oldsmar, FL 34677 (fantasy adventure) (00)1 813 891 1702

CRUSADE FINE ARTS LTD, PO Box 845, Bayport, NY 11705 (fantasy and adventure) (00)1 631 472 2866

DARK HORSE COMICS, 10956 South East Main Street, Milwaukie, OR 97222 (adventure titles, licensed, US and Japanese manga) (00)1 503 652 8815

DC COMICS, 1700 Broadway, NY 10019 (adventure and humour, MAD, Vertigo and Paradox Press imprints) (00)1 212 636 5400

DRAWN & QUARTERLY, PO Box 48056, Montreal, Quebec, H2V 4SB, Canada (black and white biog)

DREAMWAVE PRODUCTIONS, 11 Allstate Parkway, Suite 200, Markham, Ontario L3R 9T8, Canada

DYNAMIC FORCES, 155 Ninth Avenue, Suite E, Runnemede, NJ 08078 (variant editions and merchandise) (00)1 856 312 1040

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS, 7563 Lake City Way North East, Seattle, Washington 98115 (adventure, biographical and Eros adult) (00)1 206 524 1967

HARRIS COMICS, 1115 Broadway, 8th Floor, NY 10010 (Vampirella, fantasy and horror) (00)1 212 807 7100

HEAVY METAL, 100 North Village Road, Suite 12, Rockville Center, NY 11570 (adult fantasy magazines and spin-off editions)

HUMANOIDS PUBLISHING, PO Box 931658, Hollywood, California CA 90093 (US-European editions)

IMAGE COMICS, 1071 North Batavia Street, Suite A, Orange, CA 92867 (adventure) (00)1 714 2880200

MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, 10th Floor, East 40th Street, New York, NY 10016 (adventure, humour and licensed) (00)1 212 5764000

NBM PUBLICATIONS, 185 Madison Avenue, Suite 1504, New York, NY 10016 (adult fantasy graphic novels and magazines)

ONI PRESS, 6336 South East Milwaukie Avenue, PMB 30, Portland, OR 97202 (adventure)

RADIO COMIX, 11765 West Avenue, PMB #117, San Antonio, TX 78216 (anthropomorphic manga) (00)1 210 3487195

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT, INC, PO Box 834, Stanhope, NJ 07802 (adult)

SLAVE LABOR GRAPHICS PUBLISHING, 577 South Market Street, San Jose, CA 95113 (black and white fantasy titles) (00)1 9718929

TOP SHELF PRODUCTIONS, PO Box 1282, Marietta, GA 30061-1282 (alternative and biographical titles) (00)1 770 4276395

TWOMORROWS PUBLISHING, 10407 Bedfordtown Drive, Raleigh, NC 27614 (comics feature and history magazines and books) tel: (00)1 919 449 0344 fax: (00) 1 919 449 0327

VIZ COMMUNICATIONS, PO Box 77010, San Francisco, CA 94107 (English translated manga)

WaRP GRAPHICS, 2600 South Road, Suite 44/242, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 (Elfquest and spin-offs)

United Kingdom

The following are major UK newsstand comics and graphic novel publishers. If calling from outside of the UK, you should drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe and Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

AP COMICS, Suite 3, 7 French Row, St Albans, Herts AL3 5DU (adventure)

COM.X, The Dickens Inn, Kirk Street, London WC1N 2DG (adventure titles) 020 7831 7777

DC THOMSON, 2 Albert Square, Dundee DD1 9QJ (humour and adventure comics, pocket books and annuals)

DENNIS PUBLISHING LTD, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1T 4JD (humour and adventure comics, pocket books and annuals) 020 7907 6000

EGMONT MAGAZINES LTD, 25-31 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SU (humour, licensed and pre-school titles) 020 7344 6400

HAMLYN BOOKS, 2-4 Heron Quays, London E14 4JB (graphic novels) 020 7531 8400

JOHN BROWN CITRUS PUBLISHING, The New Boathouse, 136-142 Bramley Road, London W10 6SR (albums) 020 7565 3000

KNOCKABOUT COMICS, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (humour and underground comix and graphic novels) 020 8969 2945

PANINI COMICS (UK), Panini House, Coach and Horses Passage, The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 5UJ (humour and adventure comics, Marvel licensed titles) 01892 500100

REBELLION DEVELOPMENTS LTD, The Studio, Brewer Street, Oxford OX1 1QN (Judge Dredd The Megazine and 2000 AD) 01865 792201

THE REDAN COMPANY, Canon Court East, Abbey Lawn, Shrewsbury SY2 5DE (pre-school humour and licenced titles) 01743 364433

SAVOY BOOKS, 446 Wilmslow Road, Withington, Manchester M20 3BW (adult comics magazines, books and graphic novels) 0161 445 5771

TITAN ENTERTAINMENT GROUP LTD, Titan House, 144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP (licensed graphic novels, books, magazines and comics) 020 7620 0200

France

The following are the country's major comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0033 becomes 011 33

ALBIN MICHEL, 22 rue Huyghens, 75014 Paris (albums) (0033) 1 42 79 10 00

CASTERMAN, 36 rue du Chemin Vert, 75011, Paris (albums and manga)

DARGAUD, 15-27 rue Moussorgski, 75018 Paris (albums and manga) tel: (0033) 1 53 26 32 32 fax: (0033) 1 53 26 32 00

DELCOURT, 54 rue d'Hauteville, 75010 Paris (albums and comics) tel: (0033) 1 56 03 92 20 fax: (0033) 1 56 03 92 30

FLUIDE GLACIAL, 33 avenue du Main, BP 187, 75755 Paris (comics and albums) (0033) 1 43 20 23 96

GLENAT, 31-33 rue Ernest Renan, 92130 Issy-Les-Moulineaux (albums and manga titles) tel: (0033) 1 41 46 11 41 fax: (0033) 1 41 46 11 13

J'AI LU, 84 rue de Grenelle, 75007 Paris (licenced Japanese manga) (0033) 1 44 39 34 70

LES HUMANOIDES ASSOCIES, 5 Passage Piver, 75011 Paris (albums) tel: (0033) 1 49 29 88 88 fax: (0033) 1 49 29 88 89

SEMIC FRANCE, 44316 Nantes Cedex 03 (licenced comics and albums) (0033) 2 51 86 14 14

Italy

The following are the country's major comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0039 becomes 011 39

SERGIO BONELLI EDITORE, via Buonarroti 38, 20145 Milano (black and white comics)

CULT COMICS, viale Emilio Po' 380, 41100 Modena (Image and Dark Horse licensed)

MAGIC PRESS, Zona industriale via Ragusa 18, 00040 Pavona, Roma (Vertigo and WildStorm licensed titles) (0039) 06 93020361

STAR COMICS, strada Selvette 1bis/1 Bosco (PG) (comics and black and white manga)

ASTORINA S.R.I., via Boccaccio 32, 20123 Milano (Diabolik original and reprint black and white)

KING COMICS, via Pinerolo 3, 00182 Roma (comics)

Spain

The following are the country's comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0034 becomes 011 34

NORMA EDITORAL, Fluvià 89, 08019 Barcelona (licensed DC and Dark Horse comics and albums) 0034 93 303 68 20

EDITORIAL PLANETA-DE AGOSTINI, SA, Aribau 185, 08021 Barcelona (licensed Dark Horse comics and albums)

TOUTAIN EDITOR, SA, Diagonal 325, E-08009 Barcelona (licensed Marvel, Dark Horse, Chaos!, Image and manga comics and albums) 0034 93 344 06 00

EDICIONES LA CÚPULA, Plaza de las Beatas 3, E-08003 Barcelona (adult comics and albums) 0034 32 682 8 05

Mail Order Specialists

Key to abbreviations used:

w/s	= wholesale available	CoBRA	= Comic Book Retailers' mail order protection scheme
dis	= bulk discount terms		
cat	= phone/write for catalogue	cc	= major credit cards accepted
s-cat	= sae for catalogue		
wants	= wants lists accepted	sae	= send stamped, addressed envelope with enquiry
s-wants	= sae with wants lists		

When telephoning from outside the UK, drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe & Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

Golden Age

Generally acknowledged as being published between 1938 and 1945, the first age of superhero comics, but herein designated to cover all pre-Silver Age American comics.

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Goldust Comics, 67 St John's Wood High St, London NW8 7NL (high grade, cat, wants, cc) 020 8341 5558

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax: 680686)

Silver Age

Accepted as starting in 1955 with DC's superhero rebirth through ***Detective Comics*** *#225 (intro-ducing the Martian Manhunter) and* ***Showcase*** *#4 (introducing the Barry Allen Flash). Herein covering titles up to late 1960s.*

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

East Coast Comics UK, 28 Acton Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 7LG (high grade, s-want, cc, sae) 01502 578385 (day) 560727 (eve)

Goldust Comics, 67 St John's Wood High St, London NW8 7NL (high grade, cat, wants, cc) 020 8341 5558

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Quicksilver Comics, PO Box 73, Ossett WF5 0YQ (s-cat, dis, wants, cc, CoBRA) 01924 270500 (fax: 270919)

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax 680686)

Post-Silver Age

Comics from 197u to date: From Bronze Age-Marvel Age-Lead Age up to Platinum Age-Gimmick Age-Image Age. Historians will doubtless eventually decide on a name.

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Planet Warehouse (FPI) *formerly Comics Warehouse* PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Tarpaulin Books and Comics, 5 Oak Close, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 3EZ (wants, s-cat) 01842 820139

Hot Comics

Current or key titles, first issues or first appearances of major characters. Investment titles for speculators willing to gamble.

A Place in Space, 101 Church Street, Croydon, Surrey CR0 1RN (wants, cc, dis) 020 8686 2400

Comix-shop. co.uk, 7a High Street, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 1JN (wants, cat, cc) 01628 777998

Advance Imports

US comics are not generally available in UK newsagents, except for some sea-freight shipped low-cover price DCs and Marvels, and can only be found through specialists in the rest of the world. The following companies offer air-shipped copies from all of the major US publishers.

Ace Comics, 63/64 High Street, Colchester, Essex (wants, cat, CoBRA, cc) 01206 561912

Avalon Comics, 143 Lavender Hill, London SW11 5QJ (cc, CoBRA) 020 7924 3609

Comix-shop.co.uk, 7a High Street, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 1JN (wants, cat, cc) 01628 777998

86th Floor Comics & Cards, 6 Shipley Common Lane, Ilkeston, Derbyshire DE7 8TR (dis, cat, cc) 0115 9443009

Forbidden Planet Mega-store, 179 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8JR (s-cat cc) 020 7420 3666

Gosh! Strips by Mail, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH 020 7636 1011

Planet Warehouse (FPI) *formerly Comics Warehouse*, PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

Red Hot Comics, The Warehouse Block D Unit 8, Glenwood Business Park, Glenwood Place, Glasgow G45 9UH (CoBRA, w/s, dis, wants, cc) tel/fax: 0141 630 0049

Limited Editions

Many high-profile miniseries and one-shots are also available in limited, numbered and often autographed editions (s&n). New titles, to acquire copyright, can also appear in small print-run "ashcan" editions (ash).

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (CoBRA, cc, ash, s&n, cat) 020 8446 3464

Trading Cards

Several mail order dealers carry a range of non-sports cards and related peripherals (files, folders, sleeves).

Beyond Comics, 76 Harlescott Road, Nunhead, London SE15 3BZ (s-cat, s-wants, sae, CoBRA) tel/fax: 020 7564 4213

John McDonald: Non-Sport Trading Cards, 20 Alder Grove, Coatbridge, Lanarkshire ML5 3PT (cat, wants) tel/fax: 01236 433358

Old British Titles

The popularity of old British comics continues to increase as more dealers expand into this area. The following specialise in such titles.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Weird Fantasy, 19 Decoy Road, Ormesby, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR29 3LG (s-cat, s-wants, annuals specialist)

Merchandise

Comics, film and TV-related t-shirts, posters, video games, badges, toys, action figures, etc.

Off World: The Sci-Fi Store, 142 Market Halls, Arndale Centre, Luton, Beds LU1 2TP. (specialists in Star Trek, Star Wars and sci-fi collectables) 01582 736256

Sci-Fi Merchandise Direct (FPI) and **Gear for Games (FPI)** Maldon, Essex CM9 4XD (cat) 01621 877222

Original Art

With artists having their originals returned by publishers, an increasing number of pages are now being made available for collectors.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax: 680686)

Peripherals

Acid-free protection for comics. Backing boards, protective bags, storage boxes, etc.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Just Comics, 65 Station Road, Warboys, Huntingdon, Cambs PE28 2TH (w/s only, CollectorLine™ distributor) 01487 824895 01487 824896

Planet Warehouse (FPI) *formerly Comics Warehouse*, PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

General Fantasy

As well as comics old and new, some suppliers also provide catalogues of multi-media fantasy, covering TV, film, trading cards and toys.

Forbidden Planet Mail Order, 144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP (cat) 020 7803 1900 (fax: 7803 1901)

Sci-Fi Merchandise Direct (FPI) and **Gear for Games (FPI)** Maldon, Essex CM9 4XD (cat) 01621 877222

Manga Titles

English language translations of Japanese comics and US titles drawn in the Japanese style.

United Publications, 85 Croydon Road, Keston, Kent BR2 8HU (ind, back, cat, wants, cc) 020 8325 9507

Alternative & Biographical

The following carry an extensive range of biographical and slice-of-life comicbooks and graphic novels (Fantagraphics, Maus, Crumb, Pekar...)

Gosh! Strips by Mail, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH (wants) 020 7636 1011

Knockabout Comics, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (w/s, s-cat, cc) 020 8969 2945 (fax: 8968 7614)

Page 45, 9 Market Street, Nottingham NG1 6HY 0115 9508045

Comics Auctions

Accepting lots from the general public, comics auctions provide an alternative way for collectors to sell their valuable comics. The following accept items for sale, as well as providing regular catalogues for mail order bids.

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Distributors

Anybody considering opening a comics shop or becoming a mail order dealer can obtain further information about the supply of titles from the following who bulk air import US and European comics and related items on a weekly basis.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP (graphic novels, art books, comics, remainders, film and TV, popular culture) 020 8768 0022

Diamond Comic Distributors, 2nd Floor, Warton House, 150 High Street, London E15 2NP (US and European comics, cards and related items) 020 8536 5730 (fax: 8536 5736)

Red Route Distribution, Unit 24, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (US & European comics/ graphic novels, back-list specialists) 020 8960 5855

Turnaround Publisher Services, Unit 3, Olympia Trading Estate, Coburg Road, Wood Green, London N22 6TZ (graphic novels, art books, film and TV, popular culture) 020 8829 3000

Mail Order Dealers:

CI's Mail Order Index is the industry's most cost-effective and highly-targeted way to reach a huge dedicated audience in excess of 40,000 readers every month. It costs only £4 ($6 US) per entry per issue to appear and is bookable in advance as a six-issue series. Send pre-payment of £24/$36 (plus £4.20 VAT for UK advertisers) per category with your details to:

Comics International, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ

Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International. Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 1273 566 333 or e-mail: comicsinternational@yahoo.co.uk

The letters **(FPI)** after entries indicates that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet International Ltd**

Classified

Advertising terms and conditions

Whether for publication or not, all advertisements must be accompanied by full name, home address and daytime phone number of advertiser.

• All private classified Wants or Announcements ads (comics or card related items only) are free of charge. Maximum 50 words, they will be printed at the publisher's discretion when space permits. *(Only one advertisement can be submitted per letter/per issue so everybody gets a chance to fit in!)*

• FOR SALE ads (and dealer wants/announcements) are charged:
(i) General announcements: Stating no issue numbers, prices or titles. Per 50 words (or part thereof) ..... £5.00 ($7.50 US)
(ii) List ads: Including specific titles, issues and/or prices. Minimum charge, per 100 words (or part thereof) ..... £10.00 ($15.00 US)

Full payment, to Comics International, must accompany wordage.

CI Classified, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ

For Sale

Collection for sale: 2000+ Batman-related titles (**Batman**, **Legen of the Dark Knight**, **Shadow of the Bat**, annuals, **Robin**, **Catwoman**, **Detective Comics**, **Batman Adventures**, **Chronicles**, **Nightwing**, British comics, numerous graphic novels, one-shots and limited series). Also large number of magazines (**FHM**, **Loaded**, **Maxim**, **Match**). Contact Jim for full list. E-mail: ramsfan@derbycounty.co.uk or call 01530 810016 or 07973 155735.

For sale: private collection of comics. Marvels, DC and indies from the 1960s to date, including treasuries, annuals and graphic novels. Plus lots of 1960s British comics. Write, enclosing stamp, for list and pick up some interesting bargains. M. Thatcher, 22 Kings Road, Faversham, Kent ME13 8RE.

For sale: 20,000 US comics from the 1960s to the present at below Guide prices. Warner Bros store lithographs including Alex Ross, Jim Lee, Jim Balent art. Also superhero posters, portfolios, signed books, trading cards, boxed action figures, etc. Phone 01384 348124 or e-mail slimmy20@hotmail.com. Wants lists welcome.

For sale: **Hulk** 181 (vfn) – first appearance of Wolverine – £500. Other key issues available. Call David on 01494 677262.

Wanted

Advertisers are reminded that Wanted ads must be no longer than 50 words (including address), and only single insertion private advertisements can be published free of charge.

Wanted: **Batman B** series (blue bat) 1966 bubblegum cards. Any '50s/'60s bubblegum cards, British comics – **TV**, **Tornado**, **Solo**, **TV21**, **Lady Penelope**, **Dandy**, **Beano**, etc. Will swap or buy for quality items. Ken Garrett, 28 Lord Moira Park, Ballynahinch, Co. Down BT24 8TF or call 028 97 564347.

Wanted: **Sheva's War** 4 and 5 (DC/Helix) and **Berlin** 8 (Drawn & Quarterly). I will pay sensible money for them. Call Mark on 07952 190219 or e-mail me at haircut_noway@yahoo.co.uk

Wanted: Superman, Golden Press 11195, published in 1979, anthology comic with 224 pages. Does anyone have a spare copy or know how to get hold of one in at least fine conditions? Also need TV Comic weeklies and holiday specials from the 1960s and 1970s. John Balfour, Westerstraat 67-3, Amsterdam, Holland 1015 LW.

Announcements

Fanzine and small press titles must not be offered for sale before being printed. To verify publication, a sample copy must be sent in along with the advertising copy (50 words max). Single bookings only, so everybody gets a chance!

Sgt Mike Battle: The Greatest American Hero! #5 is a flip-book spectacular with the definitive Battle vs Hitler WWII story and an epic from the 1960s guest-starring the Communist Quartet! Send £1 (and p&p) to Graham Pearce, c/o 42 Talbot Road, Penwortham, Preston, Lancashire PR1 9QX. Why not visit www.sgtmikebattle.com.

Incoming 1 is out at last. A magazine devoted to self-published and indie comics, with articles, reviews, comic strips and interviews with creators, plus lots more! For your copy, please send a cheque for £2.50 (payable to Smallzone) and an A4 sae to Smallzone, 10 Cleveland Avenue, High Ercall, Telford, Shropshire TF6 6AH.

Attention Strontium Dog fans! **Dogbreath** - the **Strontium Dog** fanzine has finally returned. The slimline issue 11 is now out. Send £2.20 cheque/PO to: Dr Bob/A. Kear, Flat 11 Beaufort Street (off Stapleton Road), Easton, Bristol BS5 0SQ. Hey, my stupidly long address takes up too much.

Sunny For Girls issue 1 – a tip top wizard girl's adventure comic in the fashionable '70s/'80s style. With mystery, spookiness, boarding schools and ballerinas. 32 A4 pages, colour cover (and free supernatural gift) £3 (plus 50p post) from P. Scott, 13 Kiln Crescent, Bishop Middleham, Ferryhill, County Durham DL17 9AP.

Sponge 3. The insanity continues as the asylum comes under attack from corporate sponsored soldiers lead by Major Zeal. But the inmates have their own ideas. Anything could happen, but probably won't... well, maybe... no. Priced £1 (plus A5 sae) from Chris Askham, 9 Balmoral Grove, Colwick, Nottingham NG4 2GB.

Take a walk on the Angry Planet, visit ancient Rome, Siberia and Klepton and see Dave Gibbons dressed as a right tit, as **Comics Retrospective** 7 delves into classic UK title **Tornado**. Plus, Marvel's Mighty Avengers. Available now, £1.20 from Tony Ingram, 3 Lower Harlings, Shotley Gate, Ipswich, Suffolk IP9 1QE.

Presenting two 24-hour comics: discover the secret of a lost civilisation in **Aggadon**, and monsters, demi-gods and a hero's quest feature in **The Tale of Temmis**. Both A5, 28 A4 pages. £1 each (including p&p). Cheques payable to David Goodman, 34 Banner Street, Wavertree, Liverpool L15 0HQ.

The story of the Ryder family's struggle against a sinister cattle baron in the old west continues with the introduction of the enigmatic Cain in **Sins of the Past** 2. Issue 1 and 2 priced £1.25 or £2 if ordered together from J. Bonney, 21 Peck Way, Rushden, Northants NN10 6BD (cheques payable to JB).

Comics artist seeks work! Artwork completed to professional standard. Write to Antonio Ghura, 21 Beck Road, Canvey Island, Essex SS8 7QW. E-mail: newplanet @supanet.com

New British independent comic: **Dusk**. "The time of day when the light is fading, but before night. A time of changing states when the journey into darkness begins. The perfect time to tell stories." Published by Dead By Dawn, A5, 68 pages. Send cheques for £4.99 to R. Starzecki, 21 Balfour Road, Bristol BS3 2AF. www.duskcomics.com

Pirates, the latest 60-page anthology from the award-nominated creators of the Accent UK collective, is now available, with work fro Garen Ewing, David Hitchcock, Dave West and many more. Buy it for £4.50 (including p&p). Make cheques payable to Barry Renshaw, Redeye, 8 Avril Close, Reddish, Stockport SK5 6HX. Or online at www.accentukpress.co.uk for full details and previews.

Solar Wind 3 – voted Best Indie Comic at the National Comic Awards 2004. An affectionate and humorous tribute to British comics of the 1970s and '80s. 32 A4 pages, colour cover and free gift. £3 plus 50p (p&p) from P. Scott, 13 Kiln Crescent, Bp Middleham, Ferryhill, County Durham DL17 9AP.

Artists wanted to work on two character-driven, mature readers superhero series for submission to publishers. There has already been publisher interest in one of these series. Send two or three jpeg art samples or (preferably) a link to your work online to cabramillion@yahoo.co.uk

The O Men 24 (with colour cover!). The Eagle Award-nominated super-soap continues! Everything's gone pear-shaped, so the American superteam, the USAviours, steps in. Will they save the day – or just make things worse..? Send £1 to Martin Eden, 19a Trevelyan Road, Tooting, London SW17 9LS. Visit the website at www.theomen.free-online.co.uk.

Where are all the British female comics creators? I am very interested in promoting such creators. Send brief biogs and art samples (copies, please) to Tery Hooper, 203 Ashton Drive, Ashton Vale, Bristol BS3 2PY.

Redeye 2, the 60-page award-nominated magazine for UK indie press is now available, with loads of stuff, including interviews, reviews and features. And all for £4 (including p&p). Make cheques payable to Barry Renshaw, Redeye, 8 Avril Close, Reddish, Stockport SK5 6HX. Or online at www.accentukpress.co.uk for full details and previews.

Comic Societies

Join The Eagle Society, dedicated to the memory of Britain's National Strip Cartoon Weekly – The Eagle 1950-1969. For just £18 per year (cheques to The Eagle Society) members receive our quarterly journal **Eagle Times**, as well as the chance to attend social gatherings and meet original Eagle contributors. Write to: Keith Howard, 25a Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2UA. E-mail: rsheaf@npg.org.uk

The Comics Creators Guild for industry veterans and aspiring professionals, the largest comics organisation in Europe. Monthly meetings, newsletter, exclusive publications, free legal advice, special discounts and more. For further info contact: Comics Creators Guild, 22 St James Mansions, West End Lane, West Hampstead, London NW6 2AA. www.comicscreators.org.uk

BUY OR SELL OR EVEN TRADE

It's been tried and tested for over 10 years and it's still going strong...

Comics International's *Classified* section has turned more than one £5 "For Sale" advertiser into a big-time full page dealer.

One of the first-read sections of the magazine for both dealers and fans, *Classified* offers you the opportunity to add a part time job to boost your finances.

Most comic fans have unwanted titles taking up valuable space...

... A loft which is in need of clearing.

... A spare room which is no longer spare.

... A garage which is pining for a car.

Classified can help you not only clear that space, but earn you money while doing so. More than 4,500 such ads have been placed on this page, with regular dealers coming back each issue.

It costs only £5 to place a 50-word For Sale general announcement. Or £10 for a 100-word list ad, detailing issues and prices. Ads can appear within a week of you sending them...

So, what are you waiting for? Everybody else to jump in first?

... It's up to you!

Comic & Card Events

FREE ADMISSION TO ALL SHOWS
DOORS OPEN 12 NOON
OVER 160 TABLES

THE NATIONAL COLLECTORS MARKETPLACE™

2004 SUNDAY AUGUST 1

ROYAL NATIONAL HOTEL
BEDFORD WAY
LONDON WC1

2000 AD
ACTION FIGURES
ANIME
BABYLON 5
BRITISH COMICS
BUFFY
COMIC BOOK SUPPLIES
GAMING CARDS
GOLDEN AGE COMICS
LATEST IMPORT COMICS
NON-SPORTS CARDS
ORIGINAL ARTWORK
POKEMON
SILVER AGE COMICS
SPORTS CARDS
SCI FI/FANTASY
STAR TREK
STAR WARS
TOYS
TRADING CARD SUPPLIES
VIDEOS

The National, with 160 tables is the largest regular marketplace for comicbook and trading card collectors in the U.K. You will also find a whole range of related materials including Sci-fi, Fantasy, Film, TV and Toys fromleading British & international dealers.

HOW TO GET THERE. BUS: 68, 91, 168 or 188 to Woburn Place. UNDERGROUND: Piccadilly Line to Russell Square. NATIONAL RAIL: Euston and Kings Cross are within walking distance of the venue.

FUTURE DATE: 3RD OCTOBER 2004

COMICBOOK MARKETPLACE & CARD MART™

2004 SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 5

FOR AMERICAN COMICBOOKS AND TRADING CARDS

CAMDEN CENTRE
Bidborough St, London WC1

OVER 90 DEALERS TABLES!

The Comicbook Marketplace is held five times a year at the Camden Centre and is just a few minutes walk from Euston, Kings Cross and St. Pancras stations.
There are more than ninety tables with over 1,000,000 comicbooks, magazines and trading cards on sale, including S.F., Fantasy, Film and T.V. related items from Britain's top dealers.

HOW TO GET THERE. BUS: 10, 17, 30, 45, 46, 63, 73, 91, 214, or 259 to Kings Cross/Camden Town Hall. UNDERGROUND: Circle, Metropolitan, Piccadilly or Victoria Line to Kings Cross. BRITISH RAIL: Euston, Kings Cross and St. Pancras are within walking distance of the venue.

FUTURE DATE: 9TH JANUARY 2005

CARD MART™

2004 SUNDAY JULY 11

FOR SPORTS, NON-SPORTS AND COLLECTABLE GAMING CARDS

THE NATION'S TOP TRADING CARD EVENT

CAMDEN CENTRE, Bidborough St, London WC1
Dealers: for table availability phone 020 747 66 873

www.comicmart.co.uk

Events

A summary of all the events advertised this issue

July

10/7 Newcastle: Comic Mart & Card Show, University of Northumbria, Students' Union Ballroom, Sandyford Road ..... (p56)
11/7 London: Card Mart, Camden Centre, Bidborough Street ..... (p66)
17/7 Birmingham: Comic Mart & Card Show, The Clarendon Suites, Hagley Road, Birmingham ..... (p56)
17/7 Leeds: Staz Johnson signing at OK Comics, Leeds ..... (p11)
27/7 QVC: Dynamic Forces 10th Anniversary show, 10pm ..... (p11)
31/7 Sheffield: Comic Mart & Card Show, The Royal Society for the Blind, Main Hall, Mappin Street (off West Street) ..... (p56)

August

1/8 London: The National Collectors' Marketplace, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way ..... (p66)
7/8 Manchester: Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tib Street, Piccadilly, Manchester ..... (p56)
8/8 Liverpool: Comic Mart & Card Show, Gladstone Hotel, Lord Nelson Street, Liverpool ..... (p56)
14-15/8 Birmingham: Memorabilia '04, The NEC ..... (p67)
14/8 Dublin: Dublin Comics & Toy Mart (free), Wynn's HOtel, 35/39 Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1 ..... (p10)
14/8 Leeds: Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds ..... (p56)
21/8 Nottingham: Comic Mart & Card Show, Victoria Leisure Centre, Gedling Street, Nottingham ..... (p56)
28/8 Glasgow: Glasgow Comic & Card Mart, Henry Wood Hall, Claremont Street, Glasgow ..... (p28)

September

4/9 Newcastle: Comic Mart & Card Show, University of Northumbria, Students' Union Ballroom, Sandyford Road ..... (p56)
5/9 London: Comicbook Marketplace & Card Mart, Camden Centre, Bidborough Street, London ..... (p66)
11/9 Birmingham: Comic Mart & Card Show, The Clarendon Suites, Hagley Road, Birmingham ..... (p56)
25/9 Manchester: Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tib Street, Piccadilly, Manchester ..... (p56)

October

2/10 Leeds: Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds ..... (p56)
3-10 London: The National Collectors' Marketplace, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way ..... (p66)
11/10 Glasgow: Glasgow Comic & Card Mart, Henry Wood Hall, Claremont Street, Glasgow ..... (p28)
16/10 Newcastle: Comic Mart & Card Show, University of Northumbria, Students' Union Ballroom, Sandyford Road ..... (p56)
23/10 Sheffield: Comic Mart & Card Show, The Royal Society for the Blind, Main Hall, Mappin Street (off West Street) ..... (p56)
30/10 Nottingham: Comic Mart & Card Show, Victoria Leisure Centre, Gedling Street, Nottingham ..... (p56)

November

5-7/11 Bristol: Comic Expo & ProCon, Ramada Hotel, Bristol ..... (p39)
13-14/11 Glasgow: Memorabilia '04, The SECC ..... (p67)
13/11 Leeds: Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds ..... (p56)
20/11 Birmingham: Comic Mart & Card Show, The Clarendon Suites, Hagley Road, Birmingham ..... (p56)
27-28/11 Birmingham: Memorabilia '04, The NEC ..... (p67)

January

5/9 London: Comicbook Marketplace & Card Mart, Camden Centre, Bidborough Street, London ..... (p66)

Please note: the above listing of UK comics, trading card and related events is free to Comics International display advertisers only.

WWW.MEMORABILIA.CO.UK

MEMORABILIA

CHECK THE WEBSITE FOR FULL GUEST LISTS

SCI-FI SPECIAL GUESTS TO BE ANNOUNCED END OF JULY

SPORTING MEMORABILIA

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14TH & 15TH AUGUST 2004

EUROPE'S LARGEST COLLECTORS' FAIR FOR FILM CULT TV, SCI-FI, POP AND SPORTING MEMORABILIA. WITH OVER 750 TRADE STANDS EACH DAY AND MANY TOP STAR SIGNINGS

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Janina Faye

Shane Rimmer

Madeline smith

Ingrid Pitt

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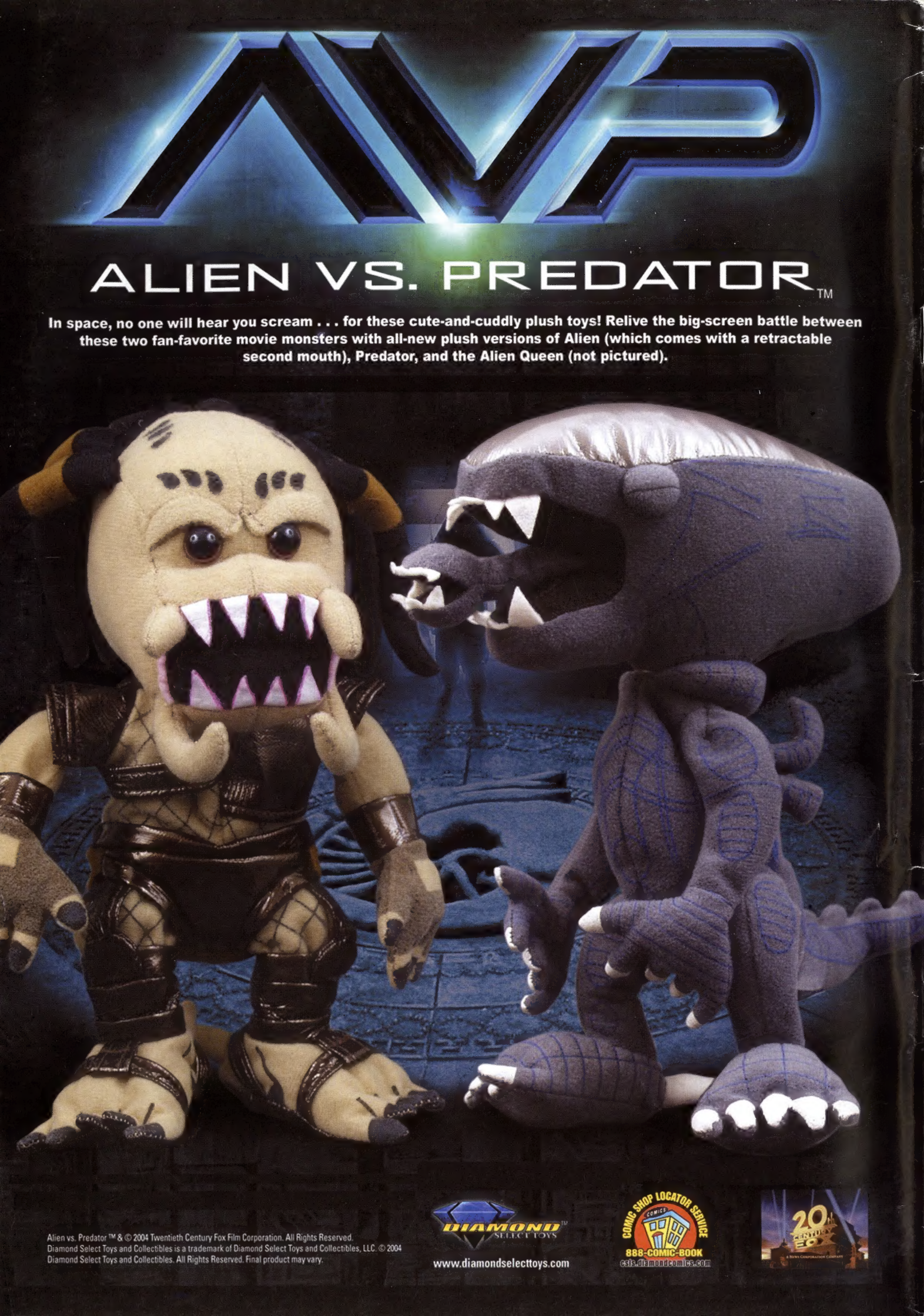
Adult £10.00
Child/Senior Citizen £5.00
Family(2adults+3children)£25.00

EARLY ENTRY SATURDAY
Adult £15.00
Child/Senior Citizen £10.00
Family(2adults+3children)£35.00

WEEKEND TICKET
Adult £17.50
Child/Senior Citizen £8.00
Family(2adults+3children)£40.00

TICKETS ON SALE AT NEC BOX OFFICE ON 0121 767 4555
Or simply pay at the door
DEALER TABLE ENQUIRIES CALL 01683 220787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